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The tunnel at the end of the light: Victimization in the films of Roman Polanski

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ABSTRACT

Polish-expatriate film director Roman Polanski's career has been largely overshadowed by the bizarre and tragic events of his personal life. After a horrific childhood that saw him watch helplessly as his Jewish parents were taken away by the Nazis to the concentration camps, Polanski again experienced familial tragedy when his eight-month pregnant wife Sharon Tate and four houseguests were brutally murdered in 1969 by members of the Charles Manson cult. In the aftermath of the Manson murders, the director was further victimized by the American popular press, which, according to biographer Barbara Leaming, unfairly suggested that he unwittingly "brought the tragedy upon himself" by continually producing macabre films like *Repulsion* (1965) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) (109). Subsequently, Polanski's dual identity as a victim/victimizer was permanently etched in the American consciousness after his statutory rape of thirteen-year-old Samantha Gailey, which resulted in his fleeing the United States to France in 1978 to escape sentencing.

Polanski's notorious reputation coupled with his macabre storytelling kept his films from receiving the serious critical attention they deserved. Unlike fellow suspense filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock, who saw his status elevated from craftsman to auteur in the late 1960s, Polanski has never reached the same level of stature in the film community. By recognizing that Polanski's dark cinematic vision is the semi-autobiographical work of an auteur director, film scholars are forced to come to terms with the thin line separating the roles of victim and victimizer in his life and his films. Just as the director's public identity shifted from victim to victimizer, Polanski's film protagonists typically make the same unsettling transition.

This thesis will explore how Polanski can be evaluated as an auteur director, whose personal and professional world is a never-ending circle of victimization. Polanski is a victim turned victimizer, who finds himself attacked by the critics for challenging his audience to question and evaluate the dual nature of victim/victimizer in both his life and his films. This circle of victimization is most clearly evident in the films *Cul-de-Sac* (1966), *Chinatown* (1974), *Bitter Moon* (1992), and *The Pianist* (2002). These films are the director's cathartic means of coming to terms with his personal tragedies: his unhappy first marriage to Barbara Kwiatkowska; the murder of his second wife Tate; his statutory rape of Gailey; and his separation from his family during the Holocaust, respectively. While the preceding three films paint a masochistic worldview where evil triumphs and the human spirit is always obliterated, *The Pianist* offers the first glimmer of hope in Polanski's remarkable *oeuvre* that emotional survival is possible.

For my beloved mother:

Tina Adair-Kuykendall
December 26, 1960 – August 2, 1998

Your laughter and sarcastic wit has fallen silent in my ears, but your unconditional love and support will always sound loudly in my heart.

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I've got that shed to get up. If I don't get it up now it'll never go up.
Until it's up I can't get started.
– Aston, Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker* (76)

During the year and a half of hard work that went into completing this project, I was often reminded of poor Aston. As with the shed that he longs to build in his garden, my thesis seemed to be a roadblock preventing me from moving on and fulfilling my life's dreams and ambitions. However, unlike Aston who will never have the wherewithal to hammer a single nail into a piece of wood, I am happy to say that I put pen to paper and finally concluded this chapter of my life. Before I bid Eastern Illinois University adieu, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the following people, who not only supported this project, but also gave me their encouragement and friendship.

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Roman is a survivor. The real difference between Roman and people like you and me is not that he can survive disasters and you and I can't, but that he somehow expects them.
– Victor Lownes, former head of London's *Playboy* operations (Weinraub 72)

When Harrison Ford took to the stage at the 75th Annual Academy Awards on March 23, 2003 to announce the winner of the "Best Director" Oscar statuette, few in the film industry and press thought the white envelope in his hands held the name Roman Polanski inside. Polanski – the once critically acclaimed and commercially successful Polish director of the thrillers *Knife in the Water* (1962), *Repulsion* (1965), *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), and *Chinatown* (1974) – had spent the preceding two and a half decades ostracized by much of the Hollywood community for his scandalous statutory rape of a thirteen-year-old girl in 1977 and subsequent self-exile in France to escape sentencing. Although his most recent motion picture *The Pianist* (2002) had received top honors at both the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards (BAFTAs) and the Cannes Film Festival, film critics and other journalists believed the Oscar would go to either newcomer Rob Marshall for his audience pleasing musical *Chicago* (2002) or perpetual Oscar bridesmaid Martin Scorsese for his period gang epic *Gangs of New York* (2002). Both Marshall and Scorsese had respectable reputations in Hollywood, but Polanski, according to experts, "br[ought] along way too much baggage for the academy crowd" (Ebert, "The *Sun-Times* 2003" 7D) who would perceive supporting him "as a vote for pedophilia" (Mathews para. 9).

Polanski had become a pale shadow of the director once considered one of film's foremost purveyors of suspense and the heir apparent to Alfred Hitchcock. While still highly regarded by film scholars for his *neo-noir* masterpiece *Chinatown*, Polanski was viewed by many as a "formerly brilliant..." director (Simon 61), whose promise was never fully realized, due to his sex scandal and the tragic murder of his wife Sharon Tate – the beautiful starlet of *Don't Make Waves*, *Eye of the Devil*, *Valley of the Dolls*, and Polanski's own *The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, But Your Teeth Are in My Neck* (all 1967) – by members of Charles Manson's "family" in 1969. Excluding a brief comeback with his period drama *Tess* (1979), which garnered him a César and his second "Best Director" Oscar nomination, Polanski's career languished in Europe after a string of critical and commercial disappointments, which included the offbeat comedies *Pirates* (1986) and *Bitter Moon* (1992) and the thrillers *Frantic* (1988), *Death and the Maiden* (1994), and *The Ninth Gate* (1999). In his *Great Movies* retrospective of *Chinatown*, film critic Roger Ebert of *The Chicago Sun-Times* laments what could have been:

> After several brilliant thrillers made in Europe in the early 1960s (*Knife in the Water*, *Repulsion*), [Polanski] came to California and had an enormous success (*Rosemary's Baby*, 1968). Then came the Manson murders, and he fled to Europe, making the curious *Macbeth* (1971), with its parallels to the cult killings. After *Chinatown* came charges of sex with an under-age girl, and exile in Europe. *Chinatown* shows he might have developed into a major Hollywood player, instead of scurrying to finance bizarre projects such as *Pirates* (1986). (Rev. of *Chinatown* 5E)

Due to his self-exile and fading career, Polanski was considered a has-been by the film community. With the release of *The Pianist* in 2002, however, he finally made a film that forced Hollywood to take notice and reevaluate not only his career, but also his dual role as both victim and victimizer. Based on the Holocaust memoir of real-life pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman, the film tells the inspiring tale of how Szpilman's desire to

"play the piano again" enables him to survive both being separated from his family and hiding from the Nazis in the abandoned Warsaw ghetto after liquidation. Although not completely autobiographical, the film mirrors Polanski's own painful childhood.

Polanski was born in Paris on August 18, 1933 as "Raymond Polanski"[1] to Ryszard and Bula (Katz) Polanski. A Polish Jew expatriate, Polanski's father was, according to biographer Thomas Kiernan, "a competent painter [who] lacked the language and cunning to impress the sophisticated *salonistes* of the French capital" (19). Unable to find steady work, Ryszard moved his family back to his native Krakow in 1936.[2] The decision would prove fatal three years later, when the Nazis invaded Poland and forced Polanski's family and the rest of the Jewish population into the ghettos. Polanski's parents were eventually taken to the concentration camps, but Ryszard arranged his son's escape from the Krakow ghetto in 1943 during the final day of liquidation. "Taking me to Plac Zgody, to a blind spot just behind the SS guardhouse, he coolly snipped the barbed wire with a pair of pliers," Polanski remembers. "He gave me a quick hug, and I slipped through the fence for the last time" (Polanski, *Roman* 34).

Nine-year-old Polanski lived with various families in the Polish countryside, before spending the last year of World War II hiding and scavenging on the war-torn streets of Krakow. Although reunited with his father following the war, Polanski was heartbroken to learn that his mother died in Auschwitz. "It was very difficult to accept the idea that my mother will never come back," Polanski confesses. "After war [my father] remarried, and I felt it was some betrayal to my mother, although I never really said that. I was in love with my mother like children are, and seeing your father with another woman was hurting me tremendously" (Polanski, Interview with Clive James).

This severing of the child-parent bond transformed Polanski from an innocent to a victim, as biographer Barbara Leaming explains: "with both parents gone, so was the child's identity" (17).[3]

When *The Pianist* started receiving enormous critical acclaim and other honors, Polanski was fervently attacked by many in the press and the film community, who hoped to derail his Oscar chances by reminding voters of his identity as a victimizer. One of the director's harshest critics was *World Net Daily* columnist Judith Reisman, who likened him to a "Kapo"[4] profiting off the victimization of his Jewish brethren:

> Establishment filmdom (via Polanski) serves up yet again another Jewish Holocaust special. But, one senses a deep, dark, sinister reason for Polanski's profitable Holocaust film. One suspects Polanski to be conjuring up visions of murdered Jews as a smoke screen to shift their bloodied martyrdom onto himself, using the Holocaust as a shovel to bury the public memory of his own crimes as a brutal child rapist. (para. 2)

The controversy only escalated when the *Smoking Gun* web site distributed a thirty-six-page transcript of the deposition that Polanski's victim gave to the Los Angeles County grand jury on March 24, 1977, which revealed the lurid details of the director's crimes.[5] In a *BBC News Online* report, Stephen Gaydos of *Variety* saw the transcripts' release as "part of a campaign against the film-maker." "You have to look at who has the motivation to place these kinds of stories," Gaydos said ("Polanski's Oscar" para. 6-7). Peter Biskind makes serious implications that Miramax Films, who was campaigning for Martin Scorsese, may have been behind much of the negative publicity:

> When *The Pianist* won Best Picture at the BAFTA Awards in London, Miramax panicked. Publicist [Cynthia] Swartz began badmouthing Polanski, calling him a "rapist" and "child molester." The internet site *Smoking Gun* suddenly produced the nearly thirty-year-old deposition of Polanski's victim, a flame that was fanned by Miramax soldiers, like Roger Friedman on his site, and "Page Six" of the *New York Post*. This suggested to some that the disclosure revealed the hand of Miramax although this was never proven. (*Down and Dirty* 469)

Ironically, one of Polanski's few vocal supporters was his victim herself: Samantha Gailey-Geimer, who by then was a thirty-nine-year-old mother of three living in Hawaii. In addition to granting television interviews with both Larry King and Diane Sawyer to express her views on the sex scandal (Friedman para. 3), she wrote a controversial op-ed piece in the February 23, 2003 edition of *The Los Angeles Times* urging Oscar voters to "Judge the Movie, Not the Man":

> Now that he's been nominated for an Academy Award, it's all being reopened. I'm being asked: Should he be given the award? Should he be rewarded for his behavior? Should he be allowed back into the United States after fleeing 25 years ago?
>
> Here's the way I feel about it: I don't really have any hard feelings toward him, or any sympathy either. He is a stranger to me.
>
> But I believe that Mr. Polanski and his film should be honored according to the quality of the work. What he does for a living and how good he is at it have nothing to do with me or what he did to me. I don't think it would be fair to take past events into consideration. I think that the academy members should vote for the movies they feel deserve it. Not for people they feel are popular. ("Judge the Movie" para. 6-8)

Despite the efforts of Polanski's detractors, the academy followed Gailey-Geimer's wishes and judged *The Pianist* on its own merits. Polanski was awarded his first Oscar as "Best Director" for the film, but was unable to attend out of fear of being arrested. Harrison Ford graciously accepted the statuette on the behalf of his *Frantic* director, and subsequently delivered it to him in person five months later at the Deauville Film Festival in France. When handed the award, Polanski jokingly asked Ford if he was going to remove the statuette from its box. "Look, he's directing me," Ford said to an observing Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America. "That's what I do," Polanski replied (Thomas 103).

Polanski's direction of *The Pianist* was not limited to what audiences saw onscreen. The film marked the first time in the director's forty-year career that he openly encouraged people to draw parallels between one of his films and his tragic personal life. Although he had shunned personal interviews to promote the film, Polanski and Focus Films "directed" *The Pianist*'s publicity campaign by having him star in a short featurette that ballyhooed the film as a semi-autobiographical effort.[6] Polanski's personal connection to the Holocaust gave the already deserving film an added dimension that likely helped sway Oscar voters. "I am deeply touched to have received the Oscar for best director for a film which recounts events which are so close to my personal experience," Polanski stated ("Polanski Finally" para. 10). This overt admittance is in stark contrast to how Polanski has historically promoted his films. At the very beginning of his career, Polanski neither encouraged nor discouraged these comparisons. The press would try to probe the director's mind and ask if his dark films were the result of his Holocaust experiences, but typically they were met with only halfhearted agreement. "I don't know. It's a question I've asked myself many times. There's undoubtedly some influence from it," Polanski admitted to Joseph Gelmis in the late 1960s (141).[7] Instead of publicly psychoanalyzing himself to the press, Polanski would recount his painful childhood and let people draw their own conclusions.

Polanski's attitude on this subject changed considerably after his wife Sharon Tate and four of his houseguests were brutally murdered by the Manson "family" in 1969. At the time, Polanski was not only victimized by the murders, but also by the American popular press, which, according to Leaming, unfairly suggested that he unwittingly "brought the tragedy upon himself" by continually producing macabre films

like *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby* (109). *Time* wrote that the murders were "as grisly as anything depicted in Polanski's film explorations of the dark and melancholy corners of the human character" ("Nothing But Bodies" 24), while *Newsweek* concluded its original piece by quoting a detective who stated that the crime was "weirder than *Rosemary's Baby*" ("The Hollywood Murders" 28). His resentment of these insensitive implications was minimal, however, when compared to his outrage over the press' ridiculously inaccurate portrait of Tate as a "student of black magic and voodoo and the occult" (King 242). Polanski was still fuming two years later when asked by Larry DuBois of *Playboy* to comment on the alleged occult connection:

> Do you want me to be rude with you? As I said before, not only do I not endorse the occult but it is something so foreign to my rational, materialistic philosophy of life that I protest against those implications. And Sharon—it was *fantastic* what they were attributing to her. A monster out of the sweetest, most innocent, lovable human being. She was kindness itself to everybody and everything around her—people, animals, everything. She just didn't have a bad bone in her body. She was a unique person. It's difficult to describe her character. She was just utterly good, the kindest human being I've ever met, with an extreme patience. To live with me was proof of her patience, because to be near me must be an ordeal. (100)

Even after Manson and his followers were arrested and later convicted, Polanski's reputation still remained tainted by the murders. In 1971, the press reviewed Polanski's first post-Manson film *Macbeth* as a means of cathartically cleansing himself of the bloodshed. Now sick of these implications, which progressively became darker as his life became darker, Polanski expressed less tolerance on the subject of his films mirroring his life. "I would say [the critics] are full of shit, because it's not so," Polanski asserted to *Playboy* about the *Macbeth*-Manson connection (98). He expounded further on his frustration with the press to *The New York Times Magazine*. "There's no way out, is there?" Polanski said. "What happened was reviewed in terms of my films. Now it's

vice versa. Now my films are reviewed in terms of what happened" (Weinraub 37). These implications only escalated after Polanski fled the United States to France in 1978 after pleading guilty to "unlawful sexual intercourse" with thirteen-year-old Samantha Gailey. By this time, Polanski was convinced that America had completely turned against him. "People had a feeling of guilt because [the Manson murders] happened to me in America," Polanski explains. "...[W]hen I became guilty of sexual relations with a minor it was very easy for people to somehow switch from one side to the other. I felt that a lot of people felt relieved at not having to feel guilty towards me" (James C12).

The prickly dilemma when studying Polanski is that it is impossible to entirely divorce his life from his films. Just like his close friend Jerzy Kosinski – the Polish novelist of *The Painted Bird*, *Steps*, and *Being There* – Polanski constantly blurs the line between fact and fiction until a new artistic reality is created.[8] Kosinski explains:

> Well, to say that *The Painted Bird*, for example, is nonfiction, or even autobiographical, may be convenient for classification, but it's not easily justified. What we remember lacks the hard edge of fact. To help us along we create little fictions, highly subtle and individual scenarios which clarify and shape our experience. The remembered event becomes a fiction, a structure made to accommodate certain feelings. This is obvious to me. If it weren't for these structures, art would be too personal for the artist to create, much less for the audience to grasp. (Plimpton 189)

Polanski also produces his art in this manner. Even when he does not write his own scripts, Polanski both consciously and subconsciously chooses stories by other writers (Thomas Hardy, William Shakespeare, and Robert Towne, amongst others) that reflect his life – particularly his dual identity as victim and victimizer – and often changes the narrative (particularly on Towne's original script for *Chinatown*) to invest more of himself. He makes them personal enough to express his pain, but distant enough not to relive it. "[*The Pianist*] was a chance for him to tell this story without having to retell his

own story," Adrien Brody explains (Miller, Samantha 64). Albeit correct, Brody fails to realize that Polanski has been doing this his entire career. Polanski is the classic auteur director.

The auteur theory of film – also known as the *politique des auteurs* – was born in the 1950s out of the writings of the French New Wave critics of the influential film journal *Cahiers du cinéma*, who wanted to rectify the under appreciation shown to the director in film criticism. Up until this time, screenwriters in Hollywood and elsewhere were seen as artists, but directors were only seen as craftsmen, who were employed by the studios merely to instruct the actors and put the cameras into the proper position. This degradation of the role of the director was in the best interest of the studios, which considered craftsmen to be easier to control than artists.[9] Many of the great Hollywood studio directors bought into this idea and never claimed to be more than master technicians. "People are incorrect to compare a director to an author," John Ford insisted. "If he's a creator, he's more like an architect. And an architect conceives his plans according to precise circumstances" (Gallagher 457).

However, when France lifted its ban on American films in 1946, the French New Wave critics – including such future directors as Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette, Eric Rohmer, and François Truffaut – began noticing both recurring thematic and visual elements in films by Hollywood studio directors as diverse as Ford, Howard Hawks, and Fritz Lang.[10] "The critics in what was to become the French New Wave noticed thematic and stylistic consistencies among the films of individual directors and elevated identifiable personal signature to a standard of value," Truffaut scholar

Annette Insdorf notes. "They championed the director as the 'auteur,' the creator of a personal vision of the world which progresses from film to film" (20).

This new way of "reading" films was formulated by Truffaut in his 1954 essay *Une certaine tendance au cinéma français*, which simultaneously asserted the importance of the director and took the French film industry to task for stagnating the growth of personal cinema by putting too much emphasis on the screenwriter, who, in his view, was only interested in winning awards by adapting literary classics. Truffaut instead championed the auteur director, who oversaw the creation of both the narrative and the *mise-en-scène*[11] to deliver his own personal vision. The most controversial aspect of his theory was his assertion that any film by an auteur director was automatically worth more than one by a non-auteur. "The worst Hawks film is more interesting than [John] Huston's best," Truffaut argued (*The Films* 14). *Village Voice* critic Andrew Sarris expanded upon this idea in his book *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968*, which served as a guidebook separating the auteurs from the impersonal craftsmen. Sarris hailed neglected genre directors like Robert Aldrich, Anthony Mann, and Douglas Sirk as auteurs, while denigrating the critically esteemed Michael Curtiz, John Huston, and William Wyler as impersonal craftsmen.[12]

Auteurist critics passed off Curtiz, Huston, and Wyler as impersonal craftsmen, because they felt these directors helmed big-budget Hollywood dramas that used social commentary as a means of achieving great acclaim. They instead championed smaller films from directors often specializing in frowned upon genres (*film noir*, thrillers, westerns, etc.), who had recurring stylistic and thematic elements in all of their works. Auteurists were deemed heretics for suggesting that commercial genre films like Hawks'

gangster film *Scarface* (1932) could be spoken in the same critical breath as acclaimed social dramas like Wyler's *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946). "These critics work embarrassingly hard trying to give some semblance of intellectual respectability to a preoccupation with mindless, repetitious commercial products – the kind of action movies that the restless, rootless men who wander on 42nd Street and in the Tenderloin of all our big cities have always preferred just because they could respond to them without thought," Pauline Kael commented in *Film Quarterly*. "These movies soak up your time. I would suggest that they don't serve a very different function for Sarris or [Peter] Bogdanovich or the young men of *Movie* – even though they devise elaborate theories to justify soaking up their time" ("Circles and Squares" 22).[13]

Of the directors that the auteurist critics supported, few caused more skepticism than Alfred Hitchcock, the acknowledged "Master of Suspense," whose long list of box-office hits included the stylish thrillers *The 39 Steps* (1935), *Notorious* (1946), *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Rear Window* (1954), *North by Northwest* (1959), and *Psycho* (1960).[14] In his preface to his groundbreaking book *Hitchcock/Truffaut* – an in-depth interview that he conducted with the British expatriate director – Truffaut discusses why he believes Hitchcock represents auteurism in its truest form:

> If Hitchcock, to my way of thinking, outranks the rest, it is because he is the most complete film-maker of all. He is not merely an expert at some specific aspect of cinema, but an all-round specialist, who excels at every image, each shot, and every scene. He masterminds the construction of the screenplay as well as the photography, the cutting, and the sound track, has creative ideas on everything and can handle anything and is even, as we already know, expert at publicity!
>
> Because he exercises such complete control over all the elements of his films and imprints his personal concepts at each step of the way, Hitchcock has a distinctive style of his own. He is undoubtedly one of the few film-makers on the horizon today whose screen signature can be identified as soon as the picture begins. (18)

While today few film scholars would question Hitchcock's standing as one of the cinema's most important artists, Truffaut's assertions were considered radical, because Hitchcock's work was deemed inconsequential Hollywood commercialism at the time. "Hitchcock's reputation has suffered from the fact that he has given audiences more pleasure than is permissible for serious cinema," Sarris wrote in 1968. "No one who is so entertaining could possibly seem profound to the intellectual puritans" (*The American Cinema* 58).

Since the release of his psychological horror film *Repulsion* in 1965, Polanski has constantly found himself compared to Hitchcock.[15] The comparison is quite understandable on the surface. Both directors made names for themselves making a series of acclaimed thrillers in Europe and, subsequently, were lured to America by headstrong Hollywood studio moguls (David O. Selznick and Robert Evans, respectively), who wanted to capitalize on their notoriety and penchant for the macabre. In addition to both being well-known perfectionists who oversaw every aspect of their films, Hitchcock and Polanski were also master showmen, who routinely made cameos in their own films and considered themselves the star attraction.

Although he worked in Hollywood during the glory days of the studio system, Hitchcock was able to keep control of his films, because he was the only director in town – with the exception of Cecil B. DeMille – whose films were almost always guaranteed box-office success.[16] Due to Hitchcock's bankability, the studios allowed him to choose his own projects; cast the performers; and surround himself with trustworthy collaborators (Joan Harrison, Bernard Herrmann, and his wife/unofficial co-creator Alma Reville to name a few), who helped him bring his vision to the screen.[17] Hitchcock was

allowed to be an auteur before the term had been invented. However, when Truffaut and Sarris began applying this label to him in the 1960s, Hitchcock modestly downplayed his own importance. "A lot of people embrace the auteur theory. But it's difficult to know what someone means by it," Hitchcock stated. "I suppose they mean that the responsibility for the film rests solely on the shoulders of the director. But very often the director is no better than his script" (Bouzereau 158).

Conversely, modesty has never been a Polanski strong suit. Since he burst out on the filmmaking scene with *Knife in the Water*, which graced the September 20, 1963 cover of *Time* as an example of "Cinema as an International Art," Polanski has unabashedly hailed himself both an auteur and a star. He left Poland after making *Knife in the Water* and moved westward – first to London and then later to Hollywood – to seek the financial rewards that were being bestowed on Hollywood studio directors, but, at the same time, he wanted to be recognized as an artist like his European filmmaking contemporaries. "A director in the United States is the man who directs the film, who comes on the set and directs the actors and, puts the camera where it should be put and then looks after the cutting, if he wants to," Polanski insisted in 1969, the year after making his mark in Hollywood with *Rosemary's Baby*. "In Europe it is a little bit more. Usually the director writes the script or at least inspires the script, and the whole conception of the film from the beginning is his. He watches the production to the very end, which is the dubbing. I'm rather this kind of director" (Reisner 11).

During the late 1960s, Polanski was not the only young director in Hollywood wanting to be taken seriously artistically. A new generation of directors dubbed the "New Hollywood" – a class that included Robert Altman, Hal Ashby, Peter

Bogdanovich, Francis Ford Coppola, William Friedkin, and Martin Scorsese, amongst others – rose to prominence in the film industry. The New Hollywood directors "were unembarrassed…to assume the mantle of the artist, nor did they shrink from developing personal styles that distinguished their work from that of other directors," Biskind explains. "The new power of directors was legitimized by its own ideology, 'auteurism'" (*Easy Riders* 15-16). Although all of these directors were well-known for their huge egos and fast living, Polanski was soon pegged as one of the most hedonistic of hedonists.[18] It was a reputation that the director slowly began to revel. Polanski expressed his thoughts on the subject with *Playboy* in 1971:

> My only disappointment is that people created this conception of me as a decadent man of excess without my active participation. In the beginning, I resented it, but finally I thought, so what? People never know the truth about an individual, anyway. Among all the movies I've seen, I like *Citizen Kane* [(1941)] the most, not only for the way it's done but for what it says. It says that you never know the real truth about anyone. So who cares? This image of a hard worker laboring all day doesn't go well with me. It doesn't help me in my social life. People would get bored with me if I told them, 'Hey, listen, guys, I really work very hard. I get up at seven in the morning and I rush from one place to another on business and I don't have a spare minute to take a holiday.' I only tell people I'm a busy man when I want to get rid of them. … Otherwise, I prefer to seem frivolous, a guy who socializes all the time. For one thing, I realized that this reputation helps me in my relations with women. I've noticed that as my reputation grows worse, my success with women increases. (DuBois 108)

As illustrated by the above words, the director only added more fuel to the flame and did little to help improve his ever-worsening reputation. During the early 1970s, before his sex scandal, Polanski delighted in antagonizing everyone with his offensive statements, particularly with his sexist remarks regarding women:

> …[I]ntellectual women are rarely physically attractive. I think if a woman is physically attractive it is such a strong part of her personality that she will find it difficult to become intellectual. If you are born attractive and grow up attractive, you realize it. You see it in the mirror and hear it all around you. I think that with this kind of woman the physical appeal is so strong that it takes over their

> personality, just as an athletic man rarely becomes intellectual because he has other things going for him. (Ballad 94)
>
> Well, you must admit that most women one meets do not have the brain of [Albert] Einstein. I have a very firm theory about male and female intelligence. It causes an absolute outrage if you say that women on the average are less intelligent than men, but it happens to be true. ... I *do* dominate them. And they like it! I know, I know, this is regarded today as a Neanderthal attitude. But I know one women's lib leader who, friends tell me, is a great cocksucker. By the way, what exactly is the women's lib position on fellatio? That it's OK, but only on an equal-time basis? And why do women sometimes use words like, 'He's a *real* man'? It doesn't mean that he knits well or that he looks after the kids well. It has always meant a man who is more creative, more aggressive than a woman, because these are the qualities that have always been essential for the survival of our kind. (DuBois 110)

Quite obviously, Polanski did not become a favorite down at *Ms. Magazine* and N.O.W. headquarters. His acid-tongue compounded with his connection to the Manson murders and later "unlawful sexual intercourse" with a minor made it almost impossible for anyone to consider him seriously. He was simply too weird for the establishment and too insensitive for the counterculture. "[Polanski is] the original 5-foot Pole you wouldn't want to touch anyone with," an associate once remarked (Weinraub 68).

Polanski's notorious reputation coupled with his macabre storytelling kept his films from receiving the serious critical attention they deserved. Unlike Hitchcock, who saw his status elevated from craftsman to auteur in the late 1960s,[19] Polanski has never reached the same level of stature in the film community. Although they have always recognized his technical brilliance behind the camera, most American critics have repeatedly derided him for the sensational stories that he chooses to film. Polanski's films have tackled sadomasochism (*Cul-de-Sac*, 1966; *What?*, 1973; *Death and the Maiden*; and *Bitter Moon*); schizophrenia (*Repulsion* and *The Tenant*, 1976); Satanism (*Rosemary's Baby* and *The Ninth Gate*); vampirism (*The Fearless Vampire Killers*); and

other assorted weirdness. Even when adapting literary classics for the screen, Polanski has chosen such dark works as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which both deal with rape and murder. Interviewers have frequently tried asking Polanski to explain his fascination with the gruesome, but it is a question that makes him testy:

> I don't know why I like it. Why do some people like boxing, or writing? I'm a film maker; I make pictures. I don't like to talk about them and I don't think about why I make them. You're asking me to psychoanalyze myself and this is not something that interests me at all. ... I'm not preoccupied with the macabre—I'm rather more interested in the behavior of people under stress, when they are no longer in comfortable, everyday situations where they can afford to respect the conventional rules and morals of society. You can really learn something about a person when he's put into circumstances in which civilized values place his own identity, even his very being, in jeopardy. (DuBois 96)

Polanski's films have so bewildered critics that he has never been widely deemed an auteur. "At his best, Polanski is genuinely unpredictable; at his worst, grievously pretentious," Sarris ruled in *The American Cinema*. "Polanski's talent is as undeniable as his intentions are dubious" (151). Socially minded critics like Pauline Kael of *The New Yorker* attacked Polanski for being too personal, while auteurist critics like Stanley Kauffmann of *The New Republic* attacked him for wasting his talent on the bizarre.[20] Polanski was passed off as a mere master technician, who only makes truly great films (such as *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown*) when held under the restraint of equally headstrong collaborators like Robert Evans and Robert Towne. Sarris echoed this sentiment in his review of *Chinatown*:

> It is beginning to seem that Polanski himself is the kind of marginal artist who must be saved from himself in order for his personal flair to become apparent. The hundred-proof Polanski of *Cul-de-Sac* and *What* seems to dissolve in his absurdist acidity, but the relatively diluted Polanski of *Rosemary's Baby*, *Macbeth*, and *Chinatown* seems capable of casting a decisively dour shadow over the proceedings. He does not so much forge these films as tilt them in the

> direction of his raging unconscious. ... [N]othing in all of cinema is as gruesomely prophetic as the climactic shot in [*The Fearless*] *Vampire Killers* of Sharon Tate's fangs in Roman Polanski's neck. It is an image truly to be exorcized. Left more or less to his own devices in a personal project like *What*, Polanski tends to render his own pessimism somewhat too giddily and too chaotically. Polanski's complete lack of illusions gives him nothing on which to build. His art, left to its own devices, becomes self-consuming. He is best employed when he is destroying the illusions of others. ("Chinatown & Polanski" 85)

If Sarris defines the foundation of auteurism as a consistently unique personal vision, then his assessment of Polanski's art as "self-consuming" because of the filmmaker's personal history, contradicts Sarris' definition, and reveals how auteur theory might be subverted. Yet Sarris' contradiction itself suggests that Polanski's "pessimism" and "self-consuming" vision might best be captured by exploring the body of his works through the lens of auteur criticism.

By recognizing that Polanski's dark cinematic vision is the semi-autobiographical work of an auteur director, film scholars are forced to come to terms with the thin line separating the roles of victim and victimizer in his life and his films. Just as the director's public identity shifted from victim to victimizer, Polanski's film protagonists typically make the same unsettling transition. Most serious film scholars will admit there are eerie parallels between Polanski's tragic life and his films, but they are hesitant to venture down that dangerous path. "Representation of his philosophy, when they are asserted, rely as much on the tragic and bizarre circumstances of his personal life as they do on his films," Herbert Eagle insists at the beginning of his essay on the director in *Five Filmmakers*. "I will not attempt to psychoanalyze this very complex and highly problematic personality; indeed, I do not have the competence to do so. I would argue, in

addition, that a reading of Polanski's personal psychology is not a necessary factor for understanding the appeal and effect of his films" (92-93).

A viewer might appreciate Polanski's films on a superficial level without knowing much about his life, but an understanding of the relationship of the artist to his art does reveal rich insights into both. Scholars have tried to keep Polanski and his work separate to protect themselves. If either of Polanski's identities (victim/victimizer) are overemphasized, the scholar can easily be accused of either being an advocate of sexual abuse or a moralist intent on demonizing the director for his misdeed. To keep from facing this dilemma, scholars heed to the advice given to private detective J.J. "Jake" Gittes (Jack Nicholson) in *Chinatown* and do "as little as possible."[21]

Conversely, the popular press is not as hesitant and has been overtly drawing parallels between Polanski's life and films since the beginning, but they often lack sufficient knowledge of his personal and artistic histories to support their assessments. Instead of considering how Polanski's films were related to each other, and became darker as his personal tragedies began to mount, the popular press would only critique his latest film with the event that immediately preceded it. According to the popular press, *Macbeth* and *Tess* had to be Polanski's cathartic release of the Manson murders and his statutory rape case, respectively, because the films came so soon after these sensational events. Such assertions are shortsighted and superficial and are founded on the expectation that Polanski could have analyzed his own role in these tragedies. Because film critics and the popular press isolated Polanski and his works, they neglected to consider relationships among the films. The popular press' dependence on quick judgments prevented them from looking ahead. They failed to discover, for example, that

Chinatown – often passed off by critics as an impersonal directing assignment – tells audiences more about Polanski's feelings of guilt and helplessness over the Manson murders than *Macbeth*, or that *Bitter Moon* is similarly more revealing about his guilt over his sex crime than *Tess*.

The following chapters will explore how Polanski can be evaluated as an auteur director, whose personal and professional world is a never-ending circle of victimization. Polanski is a victim turned victimizer, who finds himself attacked by the critics for challenging his audience to question and evaluate the dual nature of victim/victimizer in both his life and his films. This circle of victimization is most clearly evident in the films *Cul-de-Sac*, *Chinatown*, *Bitter Moon*, and *The Pianist*. While the preceding three films paint a masochistic worldview where evil triumphs and the human spirit is always obliterated, *The Pianist* offers the first glimmer of hope in Polanski's remarkable *oeuvre* that emotional survival is possible.

II

DOWN THE GHASTLY ROAD:
Cul-de-Sac and the horror on Cielo Drive

> I thought, when I came upon her, that I was seizing hold of life, seizing hold of something which I could bite into. Instead I lost hold of life completely.
> – Henry Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn* (5)

Legend states that when a young Roman Polanski arrived at the Polish National Film School at Lodz in the early 1950s for his entrance examinations, he spotted another young budding artist, Jerzy Kosinski, sitting on the other side of the room. Noticing how the future author of *The Painted Bird* was meticulously dressed, Polanski introduced himself by hurling a cup of tea on Kosinski's fine suit. "Why did you do that?" Kosinski asked. "Because I wanted to figure out how someone as well organized as you would react," Polanski replied (Sloan 69).

As evident from this confrontation, Polanski has always been a mischievous prankster who delights in provoking others to cause a reaction. Audiences soon began experiencing a similar form of manipulative abuse when he began making films. Ever since he screened his first Lodz student short film *Murder* (1957) – a silent one-minute short showing an anonymous man entering an apartment and stabbing its sleeping occupant to death – Polanski has induced feelings of bewilderment and outrage from audiences. Polanski's short films "were eerie and symbolic, as though they were projections of Polanski's most deeply buried and repressed thoughts," biographer Thomas Kiernan notes. "They were gloomy and gory, mock comedies of a tortured, even insane, soul" (126).

Not surprisingly, Polanski's preoccupation with dark themes – particularly victimization – carried over into his first Polish feature *Knife in the Water* (1962). Based on a screenplay by Polanski, Jakub Goldberg, and future director Jerzy Skolimowski,[22] the film tells the tale of a Polish couple – sports journalist Andrzej (Leon Niemczyk) and his wife Christine (Jolanta Umecka) – who nearly hit a young working-class hitchhiker (Zygmunt Malanowicz) while driving to the Mazury Lakes for a weekend sailboat outing. Andrzej soon invites the hitchhiker to come along and, after noticing his wife's attraction to the young stranger, spends the next twenty-four hours psychologically humiliating him as a means to prove his own superiority (in terms of both social class and overt masculinity) to Christine. The naïveté of the hitchhiker prevents him from understanding the mind games that Andrzej is playing, so he unconsciously submits to the abuse in an effort to win the affection of both his victimizer and the observing bikini-clad Christine.

Although denounced by both Polish critics and the Communist government as being too decadent and apolitical, *Knife in the Water* migrated over to the United States and was greeted with overwhelming acclaim when it played at the New York Film Festival on September 11, 1963 (Leaming 54-55 & Polanski, *Roman* 181-182). The same qualities that turned off Polish audiences – namely the film's concentration on psychological and sexual tension – were exactly what attracted American audiences.[23] Among the film's most ardent supporters was Stanley Kauffmann of *The New Republic*, whose review entitled "Discovery of the Pole" hailed that Polanski had "made a first feature with the virtuoso *élan* that one might expect of a gifted, bright young man; but it also has insights and subtleties that are at least a decade early in him." Kauffmann was particularly impressed with the film's mature sexual conflicts:

> What Polanski has done is to build a small Sartrean system of tensions and counter-tensions rooted in character. The chief view is the husband's – an early-middle-aged man who knows better than any wife could tell him what his fakeries are, although he can never admit them; who realizes that his sexual appetite is slowly being replaced by sexual appreciations and anxieties; who in his revealed self tries to substitute richness of experience for richness of promise, in his display of maturities is not only tacitly appealing for compassion but is angrily warning the younger ones that youth is fleeting. ("Discovery" 30-31).

Polanski was appreciative of the film's strong praise in America, especially its eventual Oscar nomination as "Best Foreign Film," but, at the same time, he felt disgusted with the critics for suggesting his intentions. "In *Knife in the Water*, I thought I had managed to establish the psychology, the atmosphere and the pace all right, although some of the reviews of the picture, implying all sorts of hidden meanings and symbols, made me sick," Polanski confesses (Thompson 9). It would certainly not be the last time Polanski would have strong disagreements with the critics.

To Polanski's disappointment, ***Knife in the Water***'s rave reviews did not translate into a flood of job offers. After turning down a chance to remake *Knife in the Water* with a Hollywood cast,[24] Polanski tried to obtain financing for the black comedy *If Katelbach Comes* – co-written by him and Gérard Brach – but the project did not spark any interest in either Hollywood or London (Polanski, *Roman* 205-207). Desperately wanting to leave Poland and work in the West, Polanski agreed to direct a low-budget horror film for Michael Klinger and Tony Tenser of Compton Films in London. Klinger and Tenser were merely looking to make a cheap exploitation film, but Polanski instead gave them the Freudian horror film *Repulsion* (1965).[25] The film's psychological study of the sexually repressed Carol (Catherine Deneuve), who slowly goes crazy in her apartment and murders a pair of men (John Fraser and Patrick Wymark) who make sexual advances towards her, touched a raw nerve with both audiences and critics. A significant portion

of the latter was particularly impressed and compared the film favorably to the work of Hitchcock. "Polanski's first English-language film, *Repulsion* at first glance looks like a case study of a fragile psychopath. At second glance, or as often as a moviegoer can bear to peek through his knotted fingers, it is a Gothic horror story, a classic chiller of the *Psycho* [(1960)] school and approximately twice as persuasive," *Time* hailed. "Whether such a film finally serves any purpose other than to scare people silly remains doubtful, yet in the long tradition of cinematic shockers, *Repulsion* looms as a work of monstrous art" ("A Maiden Berserk" 115).

Ironically, *Repulsion*'s detractors also echoed *Time*'s sentiments. Although quickly conceding the film's technical brilliance, Kauffmann could not understand why Polanski would utilize his skill on such gruesome material:

> [Polanski's] second long work confirms his talent in every frame, but it raises the question of whether his professionalism may be a malady and whether its focus on pathology may be, in a large sense, decadent. ... [W]ith a sure sense of tempo (slow when it needs to be), with the power to make the girl's apparitions frighteningly real, with a visual selectivity that is always varied but never freakish, Polanski moves this picture forcefully down its ghastly road. The question that must be asked entirely seriously of such a serious talent is: Why?
>
> ... This film, so early in his career, cannot be taken as settling anything about his future, particularly when seen against his quite different first work. One can hope that it is not a first step down a path of essentially sterile, superb professionalism. ("End of an Epoch" 31-32 & 34)

Kauffmann and likeminded critics would subsequently discover that Polanski's study of madness and murder in *Repulsion* was anything but "sterile, superb professionalism." These macabre themes were instead very personal and soon became synonymous with his public persona. The director's journey down the "ghastly road" had just begun and would reach an even darker destination with his next film, which permanently etched his reputation for the bizarre.

Due to the overwhelming commercial and critical success of *Repulsion*, Klinger and Tenser were eager to invest in another Polanski project. The pair allocated £120,000 to the director to start production on his previously unrealized project *If Katelbach Comes*,[26] which ultimately was re-titled *Cul-de-Sac* (1966) to increase its marketability with audiences (Polanski, *Roman* 222-223). An odd mix of the plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter and such hard-edged Humphrey Bogart hostage thrillers as *The Petrified Forest* (1936), *Key Largo* (1948), and *The Desperate Hours* (1955), *Cul-de-Sac* is best described by Ivan Butler who declared the film to be the "grimmest of comedies, most hilarious of tragedies" (91). The film harks back to Polanski's award-winning short film *Two Men and a Wardrobe* (1958) in that it paints a portrait of a sadistic world where the destitute, feeble, and maladjusted members of society are victimized by the masses for their perceived weaknesses and inability to conform. However, whereas the two Chaplin-esque vagabonds of *Two Men and a Wardrobe* are able to return with their bulky wardrobe dresser to the waters from which they emerged, the characters of *Cul-de-Sac* cannot seek refuge because they are hopelessly immersed in a desolate wasteland that T.S. Eliot could have called home.

The dead end of the film's title comes in the form of Rob Roy, a secluded eleventh-century castle on Lindisfarne Island, Northumberland. Along a causeway that becomes engulfed every evening by the tide, Rob Roy serves as a last stop for lost souls. Few are more lost than Dickie (Lionel Stander) and Albie (Jack MacGowran),[27] two wounded gangsters on the lam from the authorities after a botched job. Polanski's film opens with Dickie pushing their broken-down stolen car – bearing a sign reading "Popular School of Motoring" – across a desolate road, while his dying partner Albie

steers. They are an unlikely duo: whereas Dickie is a stereotypical brutish, gravel-voiced American mobster,[28] Albie is a meek, spectacled Cockney who would seem better suited behind a bank desk than a Tommy gun. Just as there is no explanation for how these mismatched men were paired, Polanski does not offer a single logical reason why they find themselves in this peculiar setting. However, as Joel Bellman explains, this is the whole point: "...there are no answers because there need be no questions. The men are there because it is absurd for them to be there..." (558).

Not only are both men at odds with their environment, but also with each other as well. After their car hits a master post by the side of the road, the gangsters stop and bicker about their predicament. "Here we are," Albie exclaims. "In the shit, thanks to your idiotic ideas." Spotting telephone wires, Dickie leaves Albie and follows them to see where they lead. If he can find a phone, he will call their boss Mr. Katelbach to request assistance. The wires eventually lead him to Rob Roy, ominously perched on a promontory overlooking the water. He finds the castle inhabited by a strange married couple – George (Donald Pleasence) and Teresa (Françoise Dorléac) – who have isolated themselves from the rest of society, so they can peacefully frolic in the sand and raise their flock of chickens.

A middle-aged milquetoast,[29] George has abandoned all ties with his former *bourgeois* lifestyle by selling his factory, divorcing his wife Agnes, and moving to Rob Roy with his new young French bride. A hopeless romantic, George naively believes that by buying this castle – the site where, reportedly, Sir Walter Scott wrote the novel of the same name – he and Teresa will be able to live a similar life of romance and high adventure. "There aren't any more writers like Walter," George sighs. "They don't

know how to tell a story like that anymore." No one, not even Teresa, shares his love of the Romantic Age. When George expresses his enthusiasm of Scott's *Rob Roy* with friends, his storybook sentimentality is shattered by their ignorance: "But, yes! There was a film. Philip, you remember. We saw it at the Majestic."[30]

Meanwhile, Teresa has grown tired of George's effeminate behavior and lack of sexual prowess after only ten months together. Polanski wastes no time painting the couple's marriage as a loveless sham by introducing Teresa as an unfaithful wife,[31] who sends her husband off to 'fly a kite' while she and their young neighbor Christopher (Iain Quarrier) make love on the beach. As she lies bare-breasted on Christopher in "the conventionally male position" (Butler 98), the viewer – as well as Dickie who is spying nearby – realizes that she is no timid housewife. She instead behaves as a dominatrix who uses her feminine wiles to control all men, particularly her husband, both mentally and sexually.

As with Polanski's characters Trelkovsky in *The Tenant* (1976) and Mimi in *Bitter Moon* (1992), George allows himself to be victimized by means of sexual humiliation in order to garner the love of others. His willingness to submit to Teresa's devilish desires comes to the forefront when they retire for the evening after the visiting Christopher and his parents (Geoffrey Sumner and Renée Houston) sail home. While looking underneath their bed for his pajama top, George mistakenly pulls out his wife's nightgown, which Teresa then forces him to wear. "Oh, what a beauty!" Teresa laughs as she continues the humiliation by applying her make-up to his face and wrapping his bald head with her scarf. Since he puts up little resistance, many critics at the time of the film's release mislabeled George as a "homosexual" (Gill 115) with a "transvestite urge"

(Crowther, "Polanski's Wild Swing" 44). The gender-bending role-playing, however, does not satisfy George nearly as much as his submission to Teresa's kinky demands. George, who realizes that Teresa is sleeping with other men,[32] will do anything she asks to placate her and keep their marriage together.

Teresa knows that he is completely dependent on her emotionally, so she uses this against him to entertain herself. Knowing very well that he cannot say no to her, Teresa strips away what little masculinity he has left, so she can assume complete control over him. Just as she oversees the chickens on their property, Teresa is the ruler of their roost and continuously pecks on George to see what will make him crack.[33] While reminiscing about the shooting of the film, Pleasence admitted that he strongly disagreed with Polanski in his interpretation of Teresa:

> [Polanski] was absolutely adamant that she did not find George attractive in any way. This was the only thing that bothered me, at least as far as the development of character was concerned. (We all had plenty of other disagreements during the making of the film, and out of this, I think, came something very exciting.) But as far as Teresa was concerned I felt it was more interesting to think that she was really rather fond of George—that in fact on occasions they had quite a good time in bed together. We tried to bring this out, Françoise (Dorleac) and I. Take the notorious nightgown scene, for instance, where she dresses George up and paints him. This was a very difficult scene indeed to motivate. Why does he let her do it? He does so because they used to enjoy considerable love and sex games together—kinky games. Admittedly, she used to go off with all the local boys, and he either knew it or he didn't, he turned the other way, but they enjoyed some good times together. In actual fact, both at the end of this scene and at the end of the one in the kitchen, she and George went into a genuinely loving embrace, but these were cut in each instance. Even so, I think this feeling comes out, with or without directorial permission! Teresa is not just a girl who marries a man for his money and then gets very bored and fed up. I think this was another area of disagreement. Of course she *is* bored, but Françoise wanted the character to be more two-dimensional, whereas Roman wanted her to be simply sluttish. (Butler 108-110)

Whatever Pleasence's interpretation of the script, Teresa's affection for George is felt nowhere in the final cut. Instead Teresa comes off as a manipulative tart who sleeps with

George because of his money and the fact that, as his old school chum's wife Marion Fairweather (Marie Kean) blatantly points out, "she would go to bed with anything in trousers."

Polanski's attitude toward women was jaded when he and Brach penned the screenplay for *Cul-de-Sac*, due, in large part, to his recent divorce from his first wife, Polish actress/model Barbara "Basia" Kwiatkowska.[34] According to Polanski biographer Barbara Leaming, the film is, in the minds of the director's Polish friends, "Polanski's fictionalized portrait of his marriage to Basia, his humiliation by her, and his continued longing" (67). Following a strained courtship with infidelities on both sides, Polanski hastily wed Kwiatkowska in 1959, because he was, in his own words, "[d]esperate to keep her, by any means, including marriage" (Polanski, *Roman* 159). Not only was he dependent on her emotionally, but also financially, since the couple's primary source of income was Kwiatkowska's acting career.

Their marital bliss, however, would be short lived. In 1961, while filming *Knife in the Water*, Polanski received word that Kwiatkowska was divorcing him to marry actor Karl Heinz Böhm, whom she met while away filming the crime thriller *Rififi in Tokyo* (1962).[35] The two men could not have been more dissimilar in appearance: whereas Polanski was short and odd-looking, Böhm – best remembered for his performance as the psychotic cameraman in the controversial *Peeping Tom* (1960) – was tall and handsome, who seemed a better fit aesthetically with the stunningly beautiful Kwiatkowksa. Leaming quotes an unnamed Polanski friend as saying: "I had a feeling that he was deeply humiliated by Basia. I mean by the divorce and the movie star and his being a short man and Basia's being tall and young and beautiful" (42-43).

Although biographers Leaming and John Parker cite Polanski's moody temperament as the source of the friction in their marriage, Kiernan quotes an unnamed Polanski friend who paints a darker portrait of Kwiatkowska that closely mirrors Teresa's treatment of George in *Cul-de-Sac*:

> She was good-looking and aggressive, very modern in her outlook and intense in her ambition. Roman adored her, mostly because being with her made him look good. Barbara was very sophisticated sexually, Roman wasn't. She was teaching him things about sex that he never imagined existed. But the real attraction for Roman was that being with her made him look good with his male friends. Barbara became like his badge of honor—none of them had such good-looking girl friends. So to Roman, this became love.
>
> Barbara, though, was not so much in love with him as she was with the idea of what he could do for her career. Usually it is the men who are the exploiters in these situations and the women who are exploited. But here Barbara [Kwiatkowska] was the exploiter and Roman the victim. Of course, this is not to say she didn't have an emotional feeling for him. She did get involved in him emotionally. She had to. After all, in many ways she came to believe that her success depended on his. She wanted him to succeed. That was the emotional investment she made in him. (138-139)

Polanski has never admitted to basing the character of Teresa on Kwiatkowska, but a story recounted by the director – involving his wife and producer Pierre Roustang – suggests parallels between the two:

> One day, while we were killing time in a restaurant on location in Touraine, waiting for the rain to stop, she started retouching her makeup. Roustang, who was sitting beside her, watched the process with an appreciative eye. On impulse Barbara turned and playfully applied some lipstick to his mouth. The result so tickled her that she improved on it with some eye shadow. Slowly but surely she made him up as a woman. Roustang just sat there, submitting to this treatment with utter docility. The effect was startling and disturbing. (Polanski, *Roman* 164)

Despite Polanski's desire to paint Teresa in what Pleasence described as a "simply sluttish," one-dimensional way, the viewer realizes that she has motivation for the victimization she inflicts: she is also a victim. George's selfish desire to lock Teresa

away from society in Rob Roy and spend his waking hours painting her (evident from the countless canvases with her image that adorn his study) has spawned a bored creature who has to revert to emotionally victimizing and sexually humiliating her husband to escape the tediousness of their home life. Consequently, George brings much of the ensuing victimization on himself, because he refuses to accept that Teresa has grown tired of him and the so-called romantic retreat that he has bought for them. In the end, Teresa cannot be entirely forgiven, however, because she never tells George of her displeasure in a straightforward manner. Just as George accepts his abuse, Teresa puts up with hers as well, which is an easier task since she is more often the perpetrator.

The pecking order shifts, however, when George and Teresa's sanctum is intruded upon by Dickie and Albie. While the couple is in the middle of their cross-dressing escapade, they hear noises coming from the kitchen and cautiously go downstairs to investigate. "Is anybody there?" George yells nervously. A gruff voice replies back, "Yes, me! Dickie!" Even though his partner Albie is immobile and dies soon afterwards, Dickie has no trouble taking control of the castle when he sees that George, who forgot to take off his wife's attire, is incapable of matching his overt masculinity. In the beginning, George tries to protect his wife and home by standing up to Dickie in the vein of the stalwart Dan Hilliard in *The Desperate Hours*, but the gangster wastes no time showing him who is in control. "Actually, I don't know what prevents me calling the police," George asserts. Dickie looks down at him with an amused grin, pinches his cheek, and replies, "I told you, Albert and me are having some trouble. Get it, little fairy?" Following this brief exchange, George becomes Dickie's 'whipping boy' and finds himself repeatedly kicked and slapped about by the gangster with little or no

provocation. Dickie physically victimizes George due to his hatred of George's *bourgeois* lifestyle and as a way to release the pain that he is experiencing from the verbal abuse inflicted upon him by his unseen boss Mr. Katelbach.

As was the case with the young hitchhiker's ill-feelings toward the *bourgeois* journalist Andrzej in Polanski's *Knife in the Water*, the American bred Dickie is disgusted at George's self-indulgent lifestyle and university education, which are benefits that were denied to both him and his partner due to their working-class backgrounds. A pivotal class warfare altercation comes when George accidentally steps on Albie's glasses, which fall on the ground as Dickie carries Albie's body to the makeshift grave that the trio has dug for him. "Just because Albie didn't go to Oxford. Real mean of you to smash his glasses. How could you?" Dickie says disgustedly. "I didn't do it on purpose. I swear to you, Dickie!" George replies. Dickie then twists George's ear and says, "Listen to the little jerk. Answering back. Will wonders never cease!" Butler asserts that Polanski and Brach's dialogue[36] in this scene possesses "a sort of madly irrelevant logic" (96), but, to the contrary, it is quite relevant and necessary to understand Dickie's attitude toward George and the social class from which he hails. Dickie feels that the poor and the working-class are stepped on by Britain's *bourgeois* class (visually symbolized by George stepping on Albie's glasses), who look down upon them and deny them access to cultural, educational, and financial benefits.

While Dickie considers him to be an active member of the *bourgeois* class, George instead believes he has shed this persona and is now, in his own words, "living the life of Riley" with Teresa in their romantic castle. Raymond Durgnat aptly describes George's delusions about his new pastoral life:

> "An Englishman's home is his castle." George vainly hopes to realize that Arcadian dream of rustic withdrawal in a country cottage, to which every Tudor semi-detached in its suburban garden testifies. George, of course, has grandly overshot the mark and ended in a medieval castle on an island. But it doesn't take much to set him off like any harassed householder on a soliloquy, as seething with nausea as any Jacobean tragic hero's, on the devastating technical and financial problems of installing central heating in his ivory tower. His contempt for commerce, his pretentions to gracious living, his veiled contempt for colleagues and neighbours, are like a liberatingly cruel parody of English baronial nostalgias... (206-207)

As Durgnat suggests in reference to George's complaints about the troublesome task of keeping Rob Roy properly heated, George is hypocritical and not willing to accept the truth about his decadent lifestyle. George's nitpicking on heating and other materialistic vanities – such as Dickie's damaging his white sports car ("Well congratulations! You made a charming mess of my motorcar...there's a good fifty guineas damage") – shows that he still has *bourgeois* tendencies and remains greatly concerned with personal wealth. George's cultural elitism is also exhibited when Dickie questions Teresa about her nationality. "You ain't English, are you?" Dickie remarks to the stubbornly silent Teresa. "Continental, eh? You got an accent. You ain't British!" Annoyed with the questioning, George snidely quips, "You're not exactly Anglo-Saxon yourself." Dickie immediately verbally chastises him for the insult, an obvious gibe at Dickie's unrefined manner and American heritage. George's pretentious attitude about his station in life blinds him to the victimization that he is inflicting on Dickie. To George, the remark is just a passing criticism, but it is actually quite wounding because it unearths the core of Dickie's psyche. Dickie is embarrassed about his lack of culture, so he is critical of those with any refinement.

The verbal victimization inflicted on Dickie by George, however, is minimal when compared to the amount that is unleashed on him by his boss Mr. Katelbach, a

mysterious much-discussed character who is never seen by the viewer, but is still nonetheless felt. When Dickie and Albie arrive at Rob Roy, one of Dickie's first items of business is to telephone Mr. Katelbach to inform him that he and Albie did not successfully complete the job that he hired them to do. "You're being very unfair, Mr. Katelbach," Dickie pleads on the telephone. "Give me a chance to explain. We've done our best." The pleading is a completely useless endeavor, because Mr. Katelbach has no intention of listening to excuses. Mr. Katelbach's callous attitude echoes that of Helen (Yvonne Furneaux), the home wrecking sister of the emotionally disturbed Carol in *Repulsion*, who refused to acknowledge Carol's feelings of distrust in regards to men, particularly Helen's married lover Michael (Ian Hendry). The emotional victimization that Helen and Mr. Katelbach inflict by not taking a moment to listen causes their victims to partake in physical victimization to escape their predicament.

Although Carol's slaying of her two male suitors in *Repulsion* was certainly a more graphically violent form of victimization, Dickie's victimization of George is even more sadistic, because his is unnecessary for survival, while Carol felt that she had to murder her male victims before they could harm her sexually. Due to Mr. Katelbach's verbal victimization of his self-esteem ("He told me I was mentally retiring or something like that"), Dickie unconsciously resorts to physically victimizing his hostages to dull the pain he is experiencing. In the vein of a schoolyard bully, Dickie must victimize those weaker than he to feel superior emotionally. Teresa invokes revenge on Dickie when the trio are surprised by the uninvited appearance of George's 'Fairweather' friends: Philip Fairweather (Robert Dorning), his wife Marion, their children Nicholas (Trevor Delaney) and Jacqueline (Jacqueline Bisset), and Jacqueline's companion Cecil (William

Franklyn). Expecting Mr. Katelbach and his gang to arrive at any moment to take him back to civilization, Dickie is furious at the Fairweather's arrival and threatens to shoot Teresa if George alerts them of his true identity. Knowing that Dickie can ill-afford to have the Fairweathers discover the truth, Teresa seizes the opportunity to force Dickie to play the role of butler and criticizes his every step in front of their guests. While Teresa relishes her newfound power, George repeatedly asks Dickie if he can aid him with the preparation of drinks and dinner for everyone. To the image of George behaving subserviently to his own butler, Marion remarks that "George will never change," an indication that George, even in his previous life, always assumed the role of victim and let people walk over him. This line suggests why George does not do anything to escape. Underneath it all, he finds comfort in the victimization that Dickie and Teresa inflict on him, because it is all that he has ever known. Life to George is all pain and sorrow.

Teresa's manipulation of George and Dickie eventually leads to both men's downfalls. Bored again after George throws the Fairweathers out of Rob Roy, Teresa gives the sleeping Dickie a hotfoot by lighting paper between his toes. Knowing Dickie will be incited by the hotfoot to commit violence on her, Teresa hopes that it will, in turn, force George to show his manhood and avenge the brutality. Her desire is only half fulfilled, because Dickie quickly knocks George sideways when he tries to stop him from whipping Teresa with his belt. Unsatisfied with George's inability to victimize Dickie, Teresa lies to her husband that Dickie tried to rape her: "He tried to kiss me. He said dreadful things. That I needed a real man, like him." As Dickie leaves to make a last effort to call Mr. Katelbach and see if he is going to come to his rescue, Teresa locates Dickie's gun and gives it to George to test his masculinity yet again. After learning that

Mr. Katelbach has left him to suffer, Dickie returns to receive his punishment: six shots in the chest by the hands of George. "Look, it's empty, not a single one left," George says with a face full of disbelief. "You've killed him," Teresa replies. "Killed him? I didn't...I didn't mean to," George mutters. With this single act, George has made the full transition from physical abuse victim to physical abuse victimizer. Dickie's and Teresa's constant belittlement of George's manhood has led to a point where he is compelled, even if only unconsciously, to prove them wrong.

While she repeatedly wanted George to assert his masculinity toward Dickie, Teresa is unable to accept his newfound identity as victimizer. She desires a man that she can easily control, so, instead of staying by his side, she victimizes George once again by running off with her new love Cecil, who has returned to retrieve the shotgun that he left during his visit earlier in the day. Now suffering a nervous breakdown, George is left to contemplate the life that he has just taken. Polanski's last shot shows George perched on a rock in the fetal position and shouting for his first wife Agnes, who represents the motherly security that he wishes he still possessed.

To the bitter disappointment of Polanski, the victimization did not end when this haunting final image of George faded to black. Although the film was awarded the prestigious *Golden Bear* at the Berlin Film Festival, *Cul-de-Sac* fell victim to a hostile American press when it opened in New York on November 7, 1966. They found the black comedy an "odious freak show" (Gill 115) that would only entertain "those who can laugh while fighting off nausea and/or sheer amazement at the prodigious waste of talent on tripe" (Crist 320). The most damaging notice came from the influential film critic Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times*, who almost a year earlier had placed

Repulsion on his annual Top Ten list and declared it to be "an outstanding piece of penetrating and pulsating cinema artistry" ("Ten Best" 1). Crowther saw *Cul-de-Sac* as a "wild swing" for Polanski and admitted to not knowing what he intended:

> But what does it all add up to, when the end of the clowning is reached and the naughtiness has been exculpated in a hideous spitting-up of blood? Is Mr. Polanski endeavoring to tell us anything about life or crime or perversion in this complex and terminally morbid joke?
>
> If he is, I sure don't get it – except maybe that people are sick, that even good humor isn't funny and that social sterility is. This is not much of a conclusion for such a technically expert film. ("Polanski's Wild Swing" 44)

Crowther viewed Polanski as another victim in a long list of casualties – others including George Roy Hill with *Hawaii* (1966), Tony Richardson with *The Loved One* (1965), and François Truffaut with *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) – from an epidemic of Hollywood film financiers who throw "unlimited funds" to young directors "to make ambitious pictures which go plop" ("They Bite" 1). This last accusation is exaggerated, given the fact that the budget of *Cul-de-Sac* was paltry by Hollywood standards and, despite the presence of respected character actors Pleasence (*The Great Escape*, 1963) and Stander (*Unfaithfully Yours*, 1948), did not boast high-priced talent. While the film was indeed more personal and less commercial than his previous feature-length efforts, particularly *Repulsion*, Crowther and none of the dissenting critics attempted to put the film's underlying theme of victimization in context with *Knife in the Water* and *Repulsion*.

The critical backlash against *Cul-de-Sac* led by Crowther greatly contributed to the abrupt closing of the film's New York engagement after a few days (Alpert 65), a move that was criticized by both Hollis Alpert of *Saturday Review* and Andrew Sarris of *The Village Voice*. Sarris saw the cancellation as a key example of the challenges facing that era's art-house film market. "If audiences can be kept away from [Polanski's] very

original work, we should all stop babbling about the future of young film-makers. There is no future, and there is no audience," Sarris wrote. "If films like *Ma[s]culine Feminine* [(1966)], *Cul-de-Sac*, and *Fahrenheit 451* can be driven off the screen by two or three daily reviewers, perhaps by no more than one, where is the market for so-called personal, poetic cinema?" ("Rev. of *Cul-de-Sac*" 27).

Angered by the fate of *Cul-de-Sac* with the press, Polanski was still fuming five years later when *Playboy* asked him to explain his reasoning for the critical drubbing that his film took:

> First, because it was ahead of its time in a way, like *Dr. Strangelove* [(1964)], which is one of the cinema's classics but came out two or three years too soon. And second, because critics are in general dumb and didn't understand the film. And third, because the more a reviewer can get stuck on his own piece and admire it, the happier he is. He's more interested in showing his own brilliance than in seriously assessing a film for the reader. ...The films that are considered masterpieces, like *Citizen Kane* [(1941)] or *L'Avventura* [(1960)] or [*2001:*] *A Space Odyssey* [(1968)], when you look back and start going through the reviews to find out how they were received at the time, you're often surprised to find that it was not that well. Somehow certain films make their reputation throughout the history of cinema *despite* the critics and often despite the public, and sometimes despite both. I think *Cul-de-Sac* is already on the way, from what I hear about it whenever I talk to young people or cinema buffs. *Cul-de-Sac* is going to be a very durable movie. (DuBois 126)

To date, however, Polanski's prophecy about *Cul-de-Sac*'s legacy has only proved partially correct. Although British and European critics generally regard the film to be among Polanski's finest directorial achievements, it is still largely ignored by stateside critics due, in part, to its unavailability on American home video.[37] Fortunately for Polanski, the film found one important admirer in Robert Evans, Parmount's vice president in charge of production, who was impressed enough to hire the director to film Ira Levin's best-selling novel *Rosemary's Baby*. The chilling tale of a pregnant housewife (Mia Farrow) who believes that a satanic cult is conspiring with her husband

(John Cassavetes) to sacrifice their unborn child, *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) revitalized Polanski's career, which was in a downslide following the critical lambasting of both *Cul-de-Sac* and his subsequent Hammer horror spoof *The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, But Your Teeth Are in My Neck* (1967), and afforded him the bankability to pursue more personal projects. Sadly, before he could fully savor his newfound fame, Polanski experienced a personal tragedy more horrific than anything suggested by *Rosemary's Baby*.

In a scenario eerily reminiscent of both *Cul-de-Sac* and *Rosemary's Baby*, members of Charles Manson's deranged hippie cult "The Family" invaded Polanski's secluded Los Angeles home on Cielo Drive – located at the end of a *cul-de-sac* in Benedict Canyon (Bugliosi 23) – on the night of August 9, 1969 and sadistically murdered his eight-month pregnant wife Sharon Tate and four houseguests: prominent men's hair stylist Jay Sebring;[38] coffee heiress Abigail Folger;[39] longtime Polanski friend Wojtek Frykowski;[40] and eighteen-year-old Steven Parent,[41] an acquaintance of the residence's caretaker William Garretson.[42] Ordered by Manson as a means to instigate an apocalyptic race war that he dubbed "Helter Skelter"[43] (King 193-194), the murders were among the bloodiest that Los Angeles had seen up to that time. Tate alone was stabbed sixteen times and her blood was used by the murderers to write the word "Pig" on the front door, reportedly to signify the victims' belonging to the wealthy establishment that Manson abhorred (210).

The news of the murders reached Polanski in London where he was writing his ill-fated adaptation of Robert Merle's novel *The Day of the Dolphin*[44] (Polanski, *Roman* 304-305). Polanski painfully recounts his reaction to his wife's murder in his

autobiography:

> I began walking around and around in small circles, my hands clenched tightly behind my back. I could hear Andy [Braunsberg] calling Gene Gutowski. "Come over here right away," he said. A moment later he shouted, "Just get over here!"
>
> I don't remember much else. According to Gene, I kept moaning, "No, no!" and punching the walls, then banging my head against them so hard he was afraid I'd injure myself. He put his arms around me and held me tight. "Did she know how much I loved her?" I asked him in Polish, over and over again. "Did she? Did she?" (308)

Compounding Polanski's grief was a sense of guilt for not being by Tate's side to protect her. "I think I would have been able to prevent it," Polanski confessed to *Playboy* in 1971. "I don't think I would let myself be intimidated or overcome by anybody" (DuBois 102). Sadly, not only was Polanski unable to save his wife from the Manson onslaught, but he also would soon watch helplessly as Tate and the other victims were victimized for a second time.

In the months following the tragedy, before the identification and arrest of the murderers, the victims were viciously attacked by a hostile press who seemed intent on blaming them for their own deaths. Since the Polanskis and the other victims were known to embrace the counter culture by practicing free love and using recreational drugs, the press used the murders as an opportunity to lash out at what it considered a heathen lifestyle. As the *New York Times*' Steven Roberts stated, the press' "attitude was summed up in the epigram: 'Live freaky, die freaky'" (Bugliosi 91).

While one would expect this attitude from the tabloids, the legitimate press was also guilty of concentrating on the swinging lifestyles of the victims instead of the tragic nature of the murders. *Time* utilized unnamed sources who described Folger as "an aimless heiress…;" Frykowski as "a hanger-on with sinister connections…;" Sebring as

someone who kept "an assortment of whips handy in his purple and black bedroom;" and Tate as "a vacuous bathing beauty who was capitalizing on Polanski's fame" ("Night" 16-17). To make matters worse, *Newsweek* printed outrageous rumors that had the murders resulting from either a "ritual mock execution that got out of hand in the glare of hallucinogens," or a hit by Frykowski's Canadian drug associates[45] and a Jamaican "hip to voodoo" ("Tate" 25).

In an era roughly thirty years before CNN and Fox News began airing around-the-clock television coverage of sensationalistic murder trials (e.g., O.J. Simpson and Scott Peterson), the press fueled the story of the murders until all of Hollywood and much of the country was gripped with fear.[46] As Barry Farrell commented in the wake of the murders, everyone had a theory based out of his or her own inner fears:

> One soon learns to recognize an entire social attitude from speculations on the murders. Those with positive knowledge that the blacks did it are those who feel most threatened by the blacks. Those who identify most closely with the victims' way of life tend to see the hand of fascist America, snuffing out its young. Each new rumor works within its own vortex of fear, swirling around in uncollected fragments until it finally winds up proving, one way or another, that the jig is up for us all. (4)

Despite the fact that supermarket tycoon Leno LaBianca and his wife Rosemary were murdered by the Manson cult in the same manner the next evening, neither the press nor the Los Angeles Police Department immediately made the connection between the Tate and LaBianca killings. The murders were not solved for another four months when Manson cult member Susan Atkins – incarcerated in connection with another murder[47] – admitted to two cellmates at Los Angeles' Sybil Brand Institute for Women that she participated in the murders (King 257-258). Consequently, Manson and four of his followers – namely Atkins, Linda Kasabian, Patricia Krenwinkel, and Charles "Tex"

Watson – were charged and later convicted of the Tate and LaBianca murders.[48] While Manson did not succeed in instigating "Helter Skelter," he is often credited with killing the hippie lifestyle that he relished. "Many people I know in Los Angeles believe that the Sixties ended abruptly on August 9, 1969, ended at the exact moment when word of the murders on Cielo Dive traveled like brushfire through the community, and in a sense this is true," Joan Didion writes in *The White Album*. "The tension broke that day. The paranoia was fulfilled" (47).

III

PAINFUL MEMORIES:
Sharon Tate Haunting the Streets of *Chinatown*

If Los Angeles is not the one authentic rectum of civilization, then I am no anatomist.
Any time you want to go out again and burn it down, count me in.
– H.L. Mencken, 15 March 1927 letter to F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald (Mellow 288)

Following the Manson murders, Roman Polanski was advised by friends to resume his career and begin recovering from his wife Sharon Tate's death. "Everybody kept saying to me, get to work immediately. Idiotic," Polanski recollected in his 1974 interview with *Rolling Stone*. "Only Stanley Kubrick understood, he told me, 'You cannot and must not work now'" (Burke 46). After two years of self-exile – spent skiing the slopes of Gstaad[49] – Polanski secured financial backing from Victor Lownes and Hugh M. Hefner of Playboy Enterprises[50] to film an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Although the film was named "Best Picture of 1971" by the National Board of Review, Polanski's *Macbeth* was not popular with audiences, and polarized critics, a significant number of whom harshly criticized the director for imbuing Shakespeare's drama with graphic bloodletting that had only been implied in previous productions. Polanski insists that his use of gore was strictly for the purpose of being truthful about the horrific nature of the title character's crimes. "You have to show violence the way it is," Polanski explains. "If you don't show it realistically, then that's immoral and harmful. If you don't upset people, then that's obscenity" (Weinraub 64).

Polanski was not alone in his attitude toward onscreen violence. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, cinematic violence in mainstream Hollywood films was moving away from the subtlety of John Ford's and Howard Hawks' westerns and Alfred Hitchcock's

suspense-thrillers[51] and becoming increasingly explicit to reflect the horrors of the Vietnam War and the era's myriad of political assassinations (e.g., John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King).[52] Film audiences may have become introduced to graphic cinematic bloodletting with the debuts of *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Dirty Dozen* (both 1967), *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Witchfinder General* (both 1968), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), and *Soldier Blue* (1970), but it was the explosion of violent films in 1971 – namely *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Devils*, *Dirty Harry*, *The French Connection*, *The Hunting Party*, *Macbeth*, and *Straw Dogs* – that fully indoctrinated them to this new "ultra-violence." All of these other violent features were less disconcerting than *Macbeth*, because their respective directors were not as personally connected to the horrors of violence and seemed to want to explore the subject instead of cleanse themselves of its repercussions.[53]

Macbeth's eerie parallels with the Manson murders – particularly Macbeth (Jon Finch) having his legion viciously kill Lady Macduff (Diane Fletcher) and the members of her household while her husband (Terence Bayler) is away – made the film play like a gory reenactment of Polanski's personal tragedy, which was still fresh in the minds of the American public.[54] Polanski adamantly denies that these parallels were intentional and that he made the film as a means of catharsis, but Pauline Kael of *The New Yorker* explains why "the connection was inevitable":

> Now it suggests either a strange form of naïveté or a divided consciousness for Polanski to complain that his *Macbeth* is being reviewed in terms of the Manson case. How else is one to look at the knives, the slain servants, the bloody mangled babies? How else is one to listen when Lady Macduff, the one warm, human character – who is, of course, soon slain, with all those of her household – says that her husband has left his wife, his babes, and his mansion, or when she says, "I have done no harm?" The movie is full of correlations with what happened in Hollywood.

She concludes that "[o]ne sees the murders in this *Macbeth* because the director has put them there" ("Killers and Thieves" 76). While the correlations between the film and the Manson murders are striking, Kael overreaches when she suggests that Polanski must have done this purposefully. As Polanski realizes, no artist can possibly understand, nor anticipate all of the elements from his personal life that materialize in his work:

> After one makes a film there are always hundreds of questions about symbols and meanings of things that one doesn't think of, while actually making the film, but occur to one perhaps afterwards. You see, there's a lot of things that one does subconsciously, finding reasons afterward. You have a scene with a knife for instance and the propman puts five knives in front of you, I would choose one of these knives. There must be a reason why I selected a particular knife even if the reason for my decision is not immediately definable. There's a reason, when one looks at a menu, that one chooses a tamale and not a steak. You know, there's always reasons for everything. Every choice finally is symbolic if looked at in this way. Because it's a choice that you alone make. I don't think that man has free will. Man's choice is always the result of his life experience. (Reisner 12)

Polanski has explained that he was drawn to *Macbeth* out of both his childhood love of Shakespeare and his desire to do a film of substance following Tate's death.[55] However, given the fact Polanski had just experienced real-life horror, it was inevitable that his wife's murder would subconsciously shape his work. Even if Polanski did not fully understand the influence the Manson murders had on his interpretation of *Macbeth*, members of the cast and crew certainly did. "It is no wonder that Polanski chose *Macbeth* for his next film," the film's screenwriter Kenneth Tynan notes. "The world of the play is one to which, from childhood, he has been no stranger – a place of considered cruelty, of ambush and unforeseen loss, of tyranny founded on bloodshed, of bright omens leading to pits of howling despair, of revenge brutally visited not only upon enemies but upon their kin" (Weinraub 64).

Despite the enormous success of *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), Polanski's career by 1973 was again waning after the poor reception to both *Macbeth* and his surrealistic sex comedy *What?* (1973), which critics found as puzzling as its title. While critics were scratching their heads over Polanski's post-Manson films, Robert Evans was similarly confounded over how to make a coherent film out of Robert Towne's convoluted *film noir* script *Chinatown*.[56] Evans once again enlisted the aid of Polanski who, in addition to signing on to direct, reportedly overhauled the screenplay by "streamlin[ing] Towne's action and excis[ing] characters" with the desire to "replicate the subjectivity of the first person narration in [Raymond] Chandler's novels" (Leaming 142). Although the full extent of Polanski's contributions to Towne's screenplay will likely remain unknown,[57] the film includes enough similarities to Polanski's own experiences of victimization – particularly to the death of Tate – that one is left to believe that his changes were substantial. If *Macbeth* is Polanski's reaction to the carnage of the Manson murders, *Chinatown* (1974) is his exploration of the pain and guilt that he felt following the tragedy.

Given that the Manson murders had occurred only four years earlier, Polanski was not entirely enthusiastic about returning to Los Angeles to direct *Chinatown*. Since the murder of Tate, his happy memories of living and working in the city were overshadowed by thoughts of despair. "...[E]very street corner reminded me of tragedy," Polanski recalls (Polanski, *Roman* 347). Although he has admitted to doing the film for primarily financial reasons,[58] Polanski must have certainly found the fatalistic worldview of *film noir* resonate to his then-morose state-of-mind. Aside from its traditional chiaroscuro cinematography – a characteristic eschewed by Polanski in favor of Technicolor[59] – *film*

noir is a genre about "an existentially despairing universe where there is no escape from mean city streets, loneliness, and death" (Giannetti 558) and "characters who are motivated by selfishness, greed, cruelty, and ambition and are willing to lie, frame, double-cross, and kill or have killed" (Phillips 248).

Typified by such private detective films as *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *The Big Sleep* (1946) and such crime dramas as *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *Out of the Past* (1947), *noir* films were embraced by audiences of the early 1940s, who related to their tales of moral ambiguity and social unrest in the midst of the Great Depression and World War II. Although the Hollywood *film noir* essentially died at the conclusion of the 1950s, the genre was resurrected in the early 1970s for an anti-establishment audience who felt victimized by the political corruption exposed during the Watergate investigation. The modern *film noirs* – dubbed *neo-noirs* – ranged from the contemptuously revisionist *The Long Goodbye* (1973) to the reverently nostalgic *Farewell, My Lovely* (1975). *Chinatown* resides somewhere in the middle, however. While Polanski's film is an updated *film noir* with subtle nods to the political paranoia of the 1970s, it still celebrates the classic *film noirs* of the 1930s – evidenced by the décor[60] and the casting of *Maltese Falcon* director John Huston as its central antagonist.

In the bleak *film noir* world, the last sliver of morality is embodied in the private detective, who, as Stanley J. Solomon explains, also appears to be morally bankrupt:

> ...the private detective manages to separate himself morally and intellectually from the environment – though he always appears to remain among the devious and the dishonest. His worldly manner and his dubious associates conceal his true personality from all but his closest friends. The style he adopts is his version in reverse of the disguise that murderers employ in order to pass as part of the establishment. The private detective plays the modern as ironist, understater, deceiver in a righteous cause. (210-211)

While traditional *film noir* gumshoes like Phillip Marlowe and Sam Spade put on a front to mask their integrity, J.J. "Jake" Gittes (Jack Nicholson) in *Chinatown* does it for a strictly personal reason: to hide that he is a grief-stricken man suffering from feelings of impotence and guilt that stem from his days working in Chinatown.

Although any Chinatown district is traditionally thought of as a wondrous locale of exotic allure, the title *Chinatown* serves as both a location and a metaphor because of the contrasting views of Polanski and Towne. In both Towne's screenplay and Polanski's film, the officers of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) see Chinatown as a wasteland that encourages deceit and suffering. Those assigned there are strongly urged by the district attorney to do "as little as possible," because the many dialects of its inhabitants make it almost impossible for an outsider to know whether he is being asked to prevent a crime or commit one.[61] Towne saw Chinatown as, in the words of Michael Eaton, a "synecdoche for the entire City of Los Angeles, a place where you have no idea what's going on and where it's best to let alone for good or ill" (13), but Polanski also insisted on the inclusion of a final scene, set in Chinatown itself, so they would not be "pulling in the public under false pretenses" (Polanski, *Roman* 348). By adding this extra rudimentary meaning to Chinatown, Polanski sentences the character of Gittes to an impending fate of doom. Sadly, unlike Towne, Gittes does not speak in metaphors.[62] As Virginia Wright Wexman points out, Gittes naively "believ[es] that the way out of Chinatown is the way to success and happiness" (97). This ignorance will ultimately cause him to make "the same mistake twice."

A once respected investigator for the district attorney, Gittes left the force in disgrace after unintentionally causing the death of a woman he loved while stationed in

Chinatown. To prevent history from repeating itself, he has opened the private investigation agency, *J.J. Gittes & Associates*, which gives him the freedom to stay out of Chinatown and select cases that require little emotional involvement. Specializing in "discreet investigations" for adultery/divorce cases,[63] Gittes adopts a professional detachment like that of surveillance expert Harry Caul in *The Conversation* (1974), whose steadfast rule is "don't know anything about curiosity." Polanski illustrates Gittes' similar business principle in the film's opening scene. While a sobbing fisherman, Curly (Burt Young), flips through photographs that Gittes' agency took of his wife (Elizabeth Harding) copulating with another man,[64] Gittes relaxes in his leather chair with a portrait of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt[65] directly behind him. In his neatly pressed white suit and polished Florsheim shoes, Gittes appears as a wannabe socialite detective – *à la* William Powell's portrayals of Nick Charles and Philo Vance – with cool indifference to the problems of the unkempt, working-class Curly.

This façade is further realized when Gittes becomes irritated at Curly's continual blubbering at the office window. "All right, Curly, enough is enough," Gittes snaps. "You can't eat the Venetian blinds. I just had 'em installed on Wednesday." On the surface, Gittes' callous reaction to Curly's sorrow can be perceived as the sort of insolence that Marlowe and Spade specialized in, but instead, he acts to distance himself from others. Gittes has no desire to witness the fisherman's pain or know that his wife will receive a blackened eye for her adultery.[66] If he thought about the suffering that his investigations inflict, Gittes would be unable to continue.

Despite his best efforts to remain insolated, Gittes opens himself up to victimization once again when he is hired by Evelyn Mulwray (Diane Ladd) to discover

whether or not her husband Hollis I. Mulwray[67] (Darrell Zwerling) – chief engineer of Los Angeles' Department of Water and Power – is having an affair. Shortly after sharing photographs of Mulwray in the arms of an unidentified blonde (Belinda Palmer) with his client, Gittes is surprised to see the images on the front page of the newspaper with the tabloid headline "Department of Water and Power Blows Fuse." Basking in the notoriety, Gittes is flattered when his barber, Barney (George Justin), showers him with praise for his latest investigative triumph, and remarks that he is "practically a movie star." Another barbershop patron (Don Erickson), however, is not quite as impressed and chastises Gittes for being unscrupulous:

Customer: You got a hell of a way to make a living.

Gittes: Oh? What do you do to make ends meet?

Customer: Mortgage Department, First National Bank.

Gittes: Tell me, did you foreclose on many families this week?

Customer: We don't publish a record in the paper, I can tell you that.

Gittes: Neither do I.

Customer: No, you have your press agent do it.

Gittes: Who is this bimbo, Barney? Is he a regular customer or what? Listen pal – I make an honest living. People only come to me when they're in a desperate situation. I help 'em out. I don't kick families out of their houses like you bums down at the bank do.

Although he has sympathy for the powerless – illustrated by his disgust over bankers foreclosing on the homes of families – Gittes is blind to the harm that his investigation has caused to Mulwray. He only sees what he wants to see. This selective vision obstructs his view of what is actually happening and causes him to set off a chain of events that will cause harm to both him and most everyone in his proximity.

After returning from the barbershop to his office, Gittes' blindness to the reality of the Mulwray case is revealed both to the audience and the detective himself. Gittes starts sharing a crude joke, told to him by Barney, with his associates Walsh (Joe Mantell) and Duffy (Bruce Glover). "So, there's this fella who's tired of screwing his wife...and his wife says why not do what the Chinese do?" Gittes says gleefully. Not only is Gittes oblivious to the sheer tastelessness of the joke, but also his inability to deliver the correct punch line negates its intended humor. Unbeknownst to Gittes, the real Evelyn Mulwray (Faye Dunaway) and her lawyer (James O'Reare) have been listening and are standing behind him ready to hit him with a defamation lawsuit. Eaton states that "this is the first instance (and one of only a very few times in the entire film) when the audience is given a different and a superior access to knowledge from that of the protagonist" (32).

Before and directly following this moment, the film unfolds via a subjective viewpoint that more mirrors Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) than Robert Montgomery's *Lady in the Lake* (1943). While Montgomery utilizes a "camera as character" technique (Bordwell 243) where the camera essentially becomes Chandler's Marlowe,[68] Hitchcock and Polanski simply confine the audience's knowledge to the viewpoint of their respective protagonists. Eaton explains that this subjective viewpoint was a key addition by Polanski to *Chinatown*'s structure:

> ...perhaps Polanski's greatest contribution to the structure of the screenplay which was eventually shot was not simply to trim down Towne's rambling first draft to eliminate extraneous characters and complicating sub-plots and incidents but to supply the story with a rigorous single perspective: that of the protagonist, J.J. Gittes. We discover as Jake discovers, we are never lagging behind him, we are never way ahead of him. (35)

The momentary shift allows Polanski to reinforce the notion that Gittes is impotent and oblivious to what is going on around him. As Noah Cross (John Huston) eventually informs him, "You may think you know what you're dealing with, but believe me, you don't." Upon deciphering that the woman who hired him was an imposter, Gittes sets forth to discover why he has been set up.

Gittes eventually reconciles with Evelyn, who advises him to "drop the whole thing," but he refuses. Although he claims to want to help Mulwray, Gittes is more concerned that this personal embarrassment will turn him into the "local joke." At the suggestion of Evelyn, Gittes goes to the Oak Pass Reservoir looking for Mulwray, but he is too late. The police have just pulled Mulwray's dead body out of the water. "Isn't this something? Middle of a drought and the water commissioner drowns – only in L.A.," Morty the coroner (Charles Knapp) laughs. Having learned about another strange drowning in the seemingly dry Los Angeles River, Gittes goes to the scene and talks to a young Mexican boy (Claudio Martinez), whom he spied there talking to Mulwray days earlier. The boy admits that he told Mulwray about how the water "comes in different parts of the river – every night a different part." Gittes decides to return to the reservoir at nightfall to investigate.

After narrowly escaping both gunfire and a large rush of water at the reservoir, Gittes is approached by two thugs: Claude Mulvihill (Roy Jenson) and a short "man with knife"[69] (Roman Polanski), who advises him to "Hold it there, kitty cat." Displaying ill-timed insolence, Gittes remarks, "Hello, Claude. Where'd you get the midget?" Neither thug is amused. Mulvihill pins Gittes against a chain link fence, while the "man with knife" sticks the tip of a switchblade into Gittes' left nostril. "You're a very nosy fellow,

kitty cat, huh? You know what happens to nosy fellows?" the "man with knife" asks. "They lose their noses." With those final words, the "man with knife" pulls the blade back and slashes the detective's nose. Engulfed in pain and covered with blood, Gittes falls to his knees and agrees not to pursue the investigation any farther.

True to his nature, Gittes – now sporting a bandage across his nose – ignores this painful warning and accepts Evelyn's monetary offer to find her husband's murderer. He slowly uncovers a plot by Cross – Evelyn's millionaire father and former owner of Los Angeles' water supply – to fake a water shortage, thereby forcing the city to build the new Alto Vallejo Dam. The Los Angeles taxpayers are unaware, however, that the $8.5 million project will instead bring the water to the northwest valley, which Cross and his Water Department associates have been buying up unscrupulously: by illegally using the names of nursing home residents as a front. "They're blowing these farmers out of their land [by destroying their water supply] and then picking it up for peanuts," Gittes informs Evelyn. "You have any idea what this land would be worth with a steady water supply? About thirty million more than they paid for it." Mulwray – still anguishing the loss of five-hundred lives from the Van der Lip Dam disaster, a dam that Cross persuaded him to build against his better judgment – had tried using his authority to block the construction of the Alto Vallejo Dam. "...[I]t won't hold. I won't build it," Mulwray had told the city council. "It's that simple – I am not going to make the same mistake twice." Gittes believes that Mulwray's act of defiance eventually cost him his life. The motive for his murder, however, will prove to be much more personal.

In his failed attempt to prevent Cross from building the dam, Mulwray shares characteristics with Gittes. He is sick of seeing the wealthy abuse their power at the

expense of the tax paying public. Also, like Gittes, Mulwray's true nature is obscured behind "a nasty reputation." Even after his death, the valley's farmers continue to mistakenly believe that Mulwray is the one destroying their water supply. "Mulwray? That's the son of a bitch who's done it to us," one of the farmers angrily remarks. "Mulwray's dead – you don't know what you're talking about, you dumb Oakie," Gittes snaps back. The farmers' inability to see that Cross, and not Mulwray, is behind the crime, transforms them from victims to victimizers. Not only do they continue to soil Mulwray's reputation, but they also knock Gittes unconscious for his disparaging remark – thus causing harm to the only two men actually trying to help the farmers.

The murder of Mulwray and the manipulation of Los Angeles' water supply, however, are of little concern to both Polanski and his audience. These acts of victimization only serve as variations of the *MacGuffin*,[70] a Hitchcockian device utilized by Polanski to move the plot forward. Typically found in the form of an inanimate object such as microfilm (*North by Northwest*, 1959) or uranium (*Notorious*, 1946), the MacGuffin is, according to Hitchcock himself, the "thing that the spies are after, but the audience *doesn't* care" (Schickel, *The Men* 289). Since Polanski never allows his audience to know Mulwray and the farmers intimately, the audience has no interest in Gittes' seeking justice for them. Inspired by the real-life Owens Valley scandal after reading Carrie McWilliams' *Southern California Country* (Towne, *Screenwriter* 152 & Wexman 102), Towne originally designed his screenplay to dramatize how the city of Los Angeles was built on water, power, and greed. "What particularly fascinated me [about McWilliams' book] was the description of how a local valley was raped to bring water to Los Angeles. The description of the valley community was so blatant I could

hardly believe what I read," Towne recalls (*Screenwriter* 152). "I wanted to tell a story about a man who raped the land and his own daughter in the name of the future. Men like Cross believe that as long as they can keep building, keep reproducing, they'll live forever" (Kasindorf 114-114B). Despite the fact that water has been a recurring image in Polanski's films since *Two Men and a Wardrobe* (1958), Polanski diminishes this political subplot. He was more interested in the incestuous rape of Cross' daughter than he was of Cross' rape of the land, and he clearly wanted his audience to understand that Cross' perverted web would eventually entangle the clueless Gittes as well.

Polanski added a dimension to Gittes' character by departing from traditional *noir* form, and showing the audience how Gittes is entrapped in Cross' and Evelyn's secret. He insisted that Towne include a scene with Gittes and Evelyn in bed (Eaton 54) – a major deviation from the traditional *film noir* formula where sex is implied but never realized onscreen. Some critics complained that the addition of this scene was an example of unnecessary '70s explicitness, but as Eaton correctly states, "the scene is anything but gratuitous, shoehorned in out of a male director's commercially motivated voyeuristic whim" (54). Their sexual encounter – shown after the fact while the pair shares a cigarette – instead serves to illustrate their mutual vulnerability and fear of being victimized. While lying in Evelyn's bed, the two question each other about personal detail: Evelyn wants to know why he left the LAPD and Gittes tries to gather information about her rich father Cross. Neither is willing to reveal much from their pasts. Consequently, their intimate exchange becomes an odd form of *coitus interruptus*. While they obviously feel attracted to each other, Gittes and Evelyn are only willing to

express their attraction so far before they recoil out of fear of being victimized. They can make love, but they cannot talk about it to each other.

This strained intimate exchange is not surprising, since it mirrors Polanski's own attitude on the subject of love at the time of the film's release. When interviewed by *Penthouse* in 1974, Polanski – sexually active but still in anguish over Tate's death – expressed his reservations about allowing himself to become emotionally intimate with another woman:

> ...I have no desire to find anybody. Probably, subconsciously, I have avoided looking for anyone. And I find it somehow repugnant, still, to think about any kind of lasting relationship with a woman. I know that time is the best doctor and everything passes, but it's still too fresh for me now.
>
> ...I have the regrettable habit of shying away. You know, we often feel guilty of living. And this is the thing which often stops us from enjoying certain things. We think it is indecent to enjoy things in life. (Ballad 92)

Polanski's confusion and reluctance are duplicated in Gittes at the end of this solitary love scene in *Chinatown.* As they lie in bed, Evelyn receives a mysterious phone call, and rushes to put her clothes on and leave. "Where are you going?" Gittes asks. "Please! Trust me this much," Evelyn responds. But Gittes does *not* trust her. Like all traditional gumshoes, Gittes begins to suspect that Evelyn is involved in Mulwray's murder, and he kicks in her Packard's right taillight so that he can follow her from a distance. Gittes tails her to a bungalow on Canyon Drive and, from the window, sees that Evelyn and her Chinese butler Khan (James Hong) are hiding Mulwray's mistress. When Evelyn gets in her car to go home, she is surprised by Gittes who is sitting in the passenger seat ready to take her to the police. He tells her that he believes she is holding the young woman against her will, but Evelyn painfully musters an explanation. "She...she...she...she's my sister," Evelyn says hesitantly. "Take it easy. If she's your

sister, she's your sister. Why all the secrecy?" Gittes asks. She does not want to explain further, so he asks whether it was because her sister was romantically involved with her husband. Evelyn quickly nods, hoping to end the conversation. Although he lets her go, the audience is well aware that Gittes does not believe she is telling the entire truth. Curiosity will compel him to find out what she is still hiding.

After the discovery of the body of Ida Sessions – the woman who earlier impersonated Mrs. Mulwray and lured Gittes into the mystery – Gittes is confronted by his ex-partner, Lieutenant Lou Escobar (Perry Lopez), who informs him that he believes Evelyn murdered Mulwray. In addition, he suspects that Gittes is extorting her by promising to withhold the truth from the police. "You're dumber than you think I think you are," Gittes snaps back. "Not only that, but I wouldn't extort a nickel from my worst enemy, Escobar. That's where I draw the line." Since he is still unsure himself whether or not Evelyn is involved, Gittes tries unsuccessfully to divert Escobar's attention by informing him of the water conspiracy, but Escobar remains unwavering in his suspicion of both Evelyn and Gittes. "Have your client in my office in two hours," Escobar demands. "And remember, I don't have to let you go. I've got you right now for withholding evidence."

Knowing that he needs to solve the mystery before Escobar arrests the both of them, Gittes goes to the Mulwray home to talk to Evelyn, but instead he finds her Chinese maid (Beulah Quo) closing up the house and putting dust covers on the furniture. "Mrs. Mulwray no home," the maid says in broken English. Not willing to accept her word, Gittes replies, "Mrs. Mulwray no home, huh? Well, I'll just have a look around..." Although his search does not yield Evelyn, he does find a key piece of evidence: a pair

of bifocals in the property's saltwater tide pool. Since the autopsy revealed that Mulwray had saltwater in his veins and was missing eyeglasses, Gittes is positive that Mulwray was drowned in the tide pool and then later moved to the reservoir to make his death appear to be an accident or a suicide. Convinced that Evelyn is a murderess, Gittes drives to her bungalow hideaway. He is determined to discover the truth once and for all, but the truth may be more than he can handle.

Pushing his way through the door, Gittes sees that Evelyn is preparing to flee to Mexico with her sister. Due to the tide pool evidence and her impromptu trip, Gittes believes that Evelyn has been playing him for the fool. Feeling hurt and betrayed, he calls Escobar and asks him to come over right away. Before the police arrive, however, Gittes insists that Evelyn tell him the truth about the identity of Mulwray's mistress: "...don't give me that crap about your sister, because you don't have a sister." She reluctantly agrees to level with him: "She's my daughter." Furious at what he considers another lie, Gittes fiercely slaps her across the face and yells, "I said I want the truth!" Stunned by the blow, Evelyn mutters, "She's my sister." He continues to strike her repeatedly until the entire truth is revealed: "She's my sister and my daughter!" The girl, named Katherine, is not Mulwray's mistress, but instead the incestuous offspring of Evelyn and her father, Noah Cross.

Confused by this shocking revelation, Gittes asks Evelyn if her father raped her. Too ashamed to answer verbally, she diverts her eyes and shakes her head no. In the published version of the screenplay, Towne includes additional dialogue where Evelyn describes how the incestuous relationship came about:

> ... he had a breakdown ... the dam broke ... my mother died ... he became a little boy ... I was fifteen ... he'd ask me what to eat for breakfast, what clothes to wear! It happened ... then I ran away ... (Towne, *Chinatown* 129)

Following this explanation, Evelyn remarks that she hates her father, not due to his predatory behavior, but instead "for turning his back on me after it happened! He couldn't face it..." (130). Polanski wisely eschews this dialogue in the film. Not only does it offer sympathy for Cross, but it also cruelly implies that Evelyn was a willing participant until her father ended the affair.

Given her nervous behavior (e.g., lighting a second cigarette while her first is still going) every time Gittes mentions her father's name, the more plausible scenario is that Evelyn was so emotionally scarred that she is still unable to fully accept that she was forced upon by her own father.[71] However, unlike Hitchcock and Joseph Stefano, who added a clinical epilogue to *Psycho* (1960) to clarify Norman Bates' transvestitism, Polanski is unwilling to give a straightforward explanation of what occurred. He leaves Evelyn's back-story obscure and ambiguous, so the audience is left the unpleasant task of filling in the sordid details.

Evelyn's admission of the incestuous relationship is a significant turning point in Polanski's film. From this scene forward, Gittes' and Evelyn's roles as victim and victimizer are reversed: the *femme fatale* is exposed as the real victim of the story, while the detective unwittingly becomes her victimizer. As Deborah Linderman explains, Gittes "eliciting 'the truth' blow by blow..." commits "a similar endoscopic rape" (197). This symbolic second rape – spurred by evidence of the bifocals, which are revealed not to be Mulwray's at all – not only causes Evelyn further emotional distress, but also puts hers and Katherine's lives in danger. If Escobar arrests Evelyn, Katherine will most

certainly be returned to Cross, from whom Evelyn has gone to great lengths to protect her.

Realizing the harm he has done, Gittes advises Evelyn to take Katherine and hide at Khan's house until he can arrange to smuggle them secretly into Mexico. "He lives at 1712 Alameda. Do you know where that is?" Evelyn asks Gittes. He hesitantly replies "Sure." After watching them leave with Khan, Gittes phones his partner Walsh:

Gittes: Listen, pal, Escobar's going to try and book me in about five minutes.

Walsh: What the hell is the matter?

Gittes: Relax and I'll tell you. Wait in the office for me about two hours. If you don't hear from me, you and Duffy meet me at 1712 Alameda.

Walsh: Jesus. That's in Chinatown, ain't it?

Gittes: I know where it is. Just do it.

To atone for the trouble he has brought to Evelyn, Gittes will transcend the "bad luck" of his past and return to Chinatown, intent not only on saving the woman he has wronged, but also exposing her father's crimes. Blinded by guilt, horror, and his need for justice, Gittes is about to make "the same mistake twice."

Upon the arrival of Escobar and his partner Loach (Dick Bakalyan), Gittes unsuccessfully tries to deceive them by saying that Evelyn "flew the coop" and is hiding at her maid's house in San Pedro. He starts to give them the maid's address, but Escobar demands that he accompany them there. "...[I]f she ain't there, you're going downtown, and you're going to stay there until she does show up," Escobar says. "Gee, Lou, I'm doing the best I can," Gittes replies with a hint of sarcasm. Knowing that he must give them the slip, Gittes takes them to the San Pedro home of Curly – his blubbering client

from the beginning of the film – and asks that they allow him to bring Evelyn out himself. "I just want a minute alone with her," Gittes says. "It would mean a lot to her…and to me." Showing momentary concern for his former partner, Escobar agrees adding, "You never learn, do you, Jake?" Despite their current roles as adversaries, Escobar does not want harm to come to Gittes. He knows that Gittes' downfall has always been mixing business with pleasure. While Escobar and Loach wait outside, Gittes hurriedly has Curly sneak him out the back and pays him to drive Evelyn and Katherine to Ensenada. "You sure this is okay?" Curly asks worriedly. Gittes gives him false assurance, all the while knowing and not caring that Curly could get into serious legal trouble. This trouble pales in comparison, however, to what is awaiting Gittes.

Now realizing the bifocals must have belonged to Mulwray's murderer, Gittes believes they could have only belonged to one man: Noah Cross. Gittes lures Cross to Evelyn's house by lying that he has Katherine. Once he arrives, Gittes confronts Cross with the evidence linking him to both Mulwray's murder and the water conspiracy. Cross shows absolutely no conscience, and delights in discussing how he is cheating Los Angeles out of millions. Gittes, by now the established conscience of *Chinatown*, cannot figure out Cross' motives. "Why are you doing it?" Gittes asks. "How much better can you eat? What can you buy that you can't already afford?" Without hesitation, Cross replies, "The future, Mr. Gits. The future." To Cross, the "future" is twofold: controlling the destinies of both his bloodline and the city of Los Angeles.

Annoyed at this interrogation, Cross demands to see Katharine: "I want the only daughter I've got left. As you found out, Evelyn was lost to me a long time ago." Not sensing an ounce of remorse, Gittes asks Cross if he blames Evelyn for what occurred –

the rape is not mentioned directly, but he knows what the detective is implying. "I don't blame myself," Cross coldly remarks. "You see, Mr. Gits, most people never have to face the fact that at the right time and the right place, they're capable of anything." Immediately following this statement, Cross has his henchman Mulvihill take the bifocals from Gittes at gunpoint. No longer in control, Gittes is forced to obey Cross: "Take us to the girl."

Gittes reluctantly drives Cross and Mulvihill to Khan's residence in the heart of Chinatown. As they arrive, Gittes finds Walsh and Duffy waiting for him, both handcuffed and in Escobar's custody. "You're under arrest, Jake," Escobar says. Believing that he can trust the police, Gittes replies "Good news" and willingly extends his hand to be handcuffed. Unfortunately, when Gittes attempts to explain how Cross murdered Mulwray because of a water conspiracy, Escobar refuses to listen. "Lou, you don't know what's going on here, I'm telling you," Gittes exclaims, but instead, it is he who is blind. Gittes fails to see the depth of Cross' influence. Handcuffed to Loach, Gittes watches as Evelyn pulls a gun on her father to keep him from taking Katharine. "Evelyn, put that gun away! Let the police handle this," Gittes frantically pleads. To these naïve words, she exasperatingly replies, "He owns the police!"

Following her repeated pleas to Cross to "get away" from Katharine, Evelyn shoots him (barely grazing his arm) and begins to drive off with her daughter. Escobar opens fire on the car, but is stopped by Gittes who uses his free arm to wrestle the lieutenant to the ground. Gittes is helpless, however, to stop Loach from firing off three more shots. Evelyn's car suddenly stops in the middle of the street. The sound of screaming and a horn blaring permeates the air. Everyone rushes over to find Katharine

screaming in horror at the sight of Evelyn's dead body slumped over the wheel – blood flowing from her mother's left eye, which was plucked out by Loach's gunfire. She is consoled by Cross, who shields her eyes and carries her off in his arms.

Stunned by the tragedy that he helped bring about, Gittes mutters to Escobar, "As little as possible" – a statement that not only reminds the audience of the LAPD's decree for policing Chinatown, but also suggests Gittes' and the police's shared responsibility for Evelyn's death. Enraged by the implication, Escobar orders Walsh and Duffy to take Gittes home. "Go home, Jake. I'm doing you a favor," Escobar says under his breath. As Walsh and Duffy walk him away from the crime scene, Gittes briefly looks back, as if trying to find a way to reverse the calamity. Walsh turns to him and says, "Forget it, Jake. It's Chinatown." Polanski's camera pulls back to show Gittes as he walks away from the film audience's view – flanked by his two associates – into the darkness of Chinatown. Victim, victimizer, and victim once again, Gittes will be isolated and haunted by the truth that only he, Noah Cross, and the audience know.

Contrary to popular belief, *Chinatown* was not universally embraced upon release. Although today honored as the "19th Greatest American Film" by the American Film Institute, the film was greeted with a less than enthusiastic reception when it opened in the United States on June 20, 1974. While a few American critics hailed the film as a "pop masterpiece..." (Hatch 30), most found it to be nothing more than "just a pretty, kinky period film" (Westerbeck 405) that was "partly political exposé and partly sensational entertainment fare" (Gans 49). Those who saw the film's brilliance were denounced as having been swept up in Paramount Pictures' massive publicity campaign. "*Chinatown*, like *The Great Gatsby* [(1974)], is a manufactured 'event,' and the most

disturbing thing is that the critics were so easily sucked in by the hype," Stephen Farber wrote in *Film Comment*. "Perhaps they actually enjoyed the movie, but they didn't simply say it was a good detective story; seduced by the high-pressure salesmanship, they had to declare it a masterpiece" (2).

At the time of *Chinatown*'s release, it was unfashionable for American critics to rave over a glossy Hollywood production with a big budget and marquee names. Most high-brow critics were deriding studio product and instead extolling the virtues of European films, which came into vogue a decade earlier when the French New Wave films and other imports like *Blow-Up* (1966) and *Women in Love* (1969) began testing the boundaries of onscreen sexuality. Strangely, *Chinatown*'s mixture of corruption, incest, and murder disturbed many in the press, even when European films with similar perverse subject matter were receiving critical acclaim. Andrew Sarris of *The Village Voice* attacked this double standard in his review of Polanski's film:

> ...I cannot understand the recent diatribes against the alleged "decadence" of the film's revelation of an incestuous father-daughter relationship between John Huston's mountainous monster of possession and presumption and Faye Dunaway's morbid lady of the plucked eyebrows. This line of attack against *Chinatown* is especially puzzling when it is practised by those who profess to be edified by Marlon Brando's simulated exploration of Maria Schneider's anal orifice with fingers dipped in butter. Could it be that Brando's use of the high-price spread instead of margarine makes *The Last Tango in Paris* [(1973)] a classier entertainment? Or is it rather that any outrage can be tolerated if it is disguised cleverly enough and stylishly enough as psychodrama? Indeed, psychological "realism" is the critical tyranny of our age, and it tends to reduce all narrative, dramatic, and cinematic art to the meager dimensions of clinical classifications. ("Chinatown" 85)

The critics were even more disturbed by *Chinatown*'s tragic ending, which John Coleman of *The New Statesman* proclaimed had "a cynical hopelessness to it, a terrible stench of corruption winning out..." (198).[72] The ending had been a bone of contention

between Polanski and Robert Towne since the beginning of the production. In Towne's original screenplay, Evelyn Mulwray shoots and kills her father in an oil field as rain pours on drought-ridden Los Angeles. This return of the story's water motif suggested the cleansing of both the farmer's soil and Evelyn's soul. In closing, Jake Gittes tells the audience in voice-over narration – another *film noir* convention that Polanski eschews in the film – that Evelyn spent four years in prison for Noah Cross' murder and then disappeared upon release.[73]

Dissatisfied with Towne's redemptive ending, Polanski insisted that the story needed to end tragically for the film to have any significance. "I knew that if *Chinatown* was to be special, not just another thriller where the good guys triumph in the final reel, Evelyn had to die," Polanski explains. "Its dramatic impact would be lost unless audiences left their seats with a sense of outrage at the injustice of it all" (Polanski, *Roman* 348). Against Towne's wishes, Polanski rewrote the ending the night before shooting the scene. In his autobiography, Robert Evans recalls Towne's furor over Polanski's changes:

> "Ruinous…immoral," said Towne. "It is not the story that I told."
>
> Roman saw it another way, the evil way, the unexpected. "It's what 'memorable' is all about," he said.
>
> "Demented," Towne fought back.
>
> "That's right," I said. "That's why Roman will get his way." (271)

Towne publicly criticized Polanski's imposed ending for years – often referring to it as "the tunnel at the end of the light" (Biskind, "The Low Road" 72) – but eventually changed his mind and reluctantly admitted that the director was right. "…[I]n retrospect,

Roman was right," Towne confessed to fellow screenwriter William Goldman. "The movie needed a stark ending after such a complex story" (223).

Although tragic endings were quite common in Hollywood films of the late 1960s and early 1970s, few were as downbeat and pessimistic as Polanski's ending in *Chinatown*. The protagonists of *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Easy Rider* (1969), and *The Wild Bunch* may have been snuffed out in the final reel, but their deaths were widely perceived as a heroic protest against the establishment. The reaction to Evelyn's death was much different. Since Gittes' desire for justice leads to Evelyn's violent demise, Vietnam/Watergate-era audiences questioned whether it was worth fighting at all. Nora Sayre of *The New York Times* addressed this concern:

> I can easily agree with those who object to the ending of the movie. We've now heard that the Dunaway character was allowed to escape in Robert Towne's original script. And a mass audience which mainly expects entertainment from a movie of this kind may be especially unprepared for the profoundly pessimistic conclusion: that the detective was wrong to chase after truth or justice, that effort and commitment are pointless, that it's best to do nothing. The movie states that tragedy can occur simply because facts are often elusive, and that it can be fatal to function in the dark. It's not a viewpoint that you'd want to hang on your wall. But it is, after all, part of this director's vision. (D19)

Just as Joan Didion in *The White Album* asserted that the optimistic Sixties ended with the murder of Tate on August 9, 1969, the ghost of Polanski's wife returns in the form of Evelyn Mulwray at the end of *Chinatown*, to signal the impending death of the defiant Seventies. Like the murder of Tate by Manson's cult followers, Evelyn Mulwray's demise symbolizes the fragile nature of social justice in the shadow of greed and power. By the start of the 1980s, many of the liberal activists' efforts from the 1970s were either forgotten or ridiculed and ended up being as futile as Gittes' desire to find the truth. "The economy had recovered, taming the ruinous inflation that had cast such a pall

over American life," Bruce J. Schulman writes of the 1980s. "Malaise and Jimmy Carter had vanished; they became subjects of mockery, symbols of the bad old days forgotten in the boosterism and patriotic exuberance of Reagan's America" (254). With the end of *Chinatown*, Polanski warns his audience that good intentions are not always rewarded. Instead, they can inadvertently bring greater suffering. "Roman's argument was, That's life," Towne explains. "Beautiful blondes die in Los Angeles. Sharon had" (Biskind, *Easy Riders* 166).

IV

THE POINT OF NO RETURN:
Bitter Moon and the sex scandal on Mulholland Drive

I loved you. I was a pentapod monster, but I loved you.
I was despicable and brutal, and turpid, and everything, *mais je t'aimais, je t'aimais!*
And there were times when I knew how you felt, and it was hell to know it, my little one.
– Humbert Humbert, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (284-285)

Despite the lukewarm critical reception to *Chinatown* (1974), Polanski's film garnered eleven Academy Award nominations – including Polanski's first as "Best Director" – but lost in every category except "Best Screenplay." Since Polanski had unselfishly given all screenwriting credit to Robert Towne, Towne was the only one to come home with Oscar gold. "The great secret was, Roman could have easily asked for a credit on *Chinatown* and he would have gotten it," Towne's ex-wife Julie Payne insists. "It wasn't just the ending. Roman simply took it over, structured the whole piece" (Biskind, *Easy Riders* 305). The film had not been an entirely happy experience for the director. Even though he was completely supported by Robert Evans and Paramount Pictures during the production,[74] Polanski felt betrayed by Evans after *Chinatown*'s release, because Evans arrogantly implied to the press that he was the only one who could bring forth greatness out of the director:

> You have to judge a director by his very best work and then get it out of him. … I have produced Roman Polanski's only two box office hits – *Rosemary's Baby* [(1968)] and *Chinatown*. The rest has been crap – except for his little pictures early in his career, of course. After *Rosemary's Baby*, he makes a picture called *What?* [(1973)]. Pure crap. I tell him so. He gets mad at me, but I'm right. He makes *Macbeth* [(1971)]. Crap. Then we make *Chinatown*. A great picture – and not just because I say so. Now he's a star again. What does he make? *The Tenant* [(1976)]. Pure unadulterated crap. Now I'd like to work with him again… (Ebert, "Interview" para. 30-31)

Polanski did not harbor the same desire, however. Evans' repeated insults helped sever their collaborative partnership. "I'd considered Bob Evans more than a producer; he was a friend," Polanski confesses. "Not for the first time, and certainly not for the last, a Hollywood experience had gone sour on me" (Polanski, *Roman* 356).

Although his partnership with Evans ceased after the producer's hurtful comments to the press, Polanski formed a strong friendship with Jack Nicholson that continued after the release of *Chinatown*. Polanski found the actor to be "the easiest person to work with..." (Ballad 95), so he was eager to cast him as the peg-legged Captain Red in a film version of his and Gérard Brach's script *Pirates*. Initially interested in re-teaming for this swashbuckling comedy, Nicholson forced Polanski to abort the project when his monetary demands scared off both Paramount and United Artists (McGilligan 293).[75] Three years later, however, they would find themselves together again in, arguably, the most sensational Hollywood sex scandal of the 1970s.

Following the disastrous critical reception to Polanski's next feature, the Kafkaesque black comedy/thriller *The Tenant*,[76] Polanski returned to Los Angeles to both adapt Lawrence Sanders' novel *The First Deadly Sin*[77] for Columbia Pictures and begin a freelance assignment for *Vogue Hommes*. Originally approached by the French men's magazine for an interview, Polanski asked its editor Gerald Azaria to let him shoot a glamour pictorial of adolescent girls instead. Polanski had seen a similar spread in *Vogue Hommes* by David Hamilton, but he wanted to do something in contrast to Hamilton's "usual romantic style..." (Polanski, *Roman* 382). "I proposed to show girls as they really were these days—sexy, pert, and thoroughly human," Polanski explains. "I told him I would cast my net wide, possibly selecting four or five girls of different nationalities:

Swedish, French, American, German" (382-383). Polanski had recently received praise for guest editing the Christmas 1976 issue of French *Vogue*, which featured erotic shots of his fifteen-year-old lover Nastassia Kinski, so Azaria, in the words of the director, "jumped at the idea and begged me to act on it" (382).

Polanski was soon introduced to thirteen-year-old Samantha Gailey and received permission from her actress mother to photograph her for *Vogue Hommes*. During the second session, which took place on March 10, 1977 at Jack Nicholson's Mulholland Drive home[78] while the actor was away skiing in Colorado (McGilligan 297), Polanski had intercourse and oral sex with the aspiring model in a guest room after photographing her topless in a Jacuzzi and serving her both champagne and part of a Quaalude (Leaming 164-166). While the illegality and immorality of Polanski's actions are irrefutable, the director and his victim disagree over her participation in the sexual encounter. "There was no doubt about [Samantha's] experience and lack of inhibition," Polanski writes in his autobiography. "She spread herself and I entered her. She wasn't unresponsive" (Polanski, *Roman* 393).[79] On the other hand, Gailey insists that their sexual encounter was not consensual. "I didn't fight him off. I said like, 'No, no, I don't want to go in there, no. I don't want to do this, no'," Gailey – today married and known as Samantha Geimer – confessed on *Larry King Live* in 2003. "And then I didn't know what else to do. We were alone. And I didn't want to – I didn't know what would happen if I made a scene. I was just scared and after giving some resistance figured, well, I guess I'll get to go home after this" (Geimer, Interview n.pag.).

Polanski's crime was discovered by Gailey's older sister, who overheard the girl telling her seventeen-year-old boyfriend the details over the telephone (Leaming 167).

Arrested the next evening at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel by the Los Angeles Police Department and released on $2,500 bail ("Roman Polanski Charged" A26), Polanski was subsequently indicted on March 24th by the Los Angeles County grand jury on six counts: "rape by use of drugs, furnishing drugs to a minor, lewd and lascivious acts on a child under 14, unlawful sexual intercourse, sodomy, and perversion" (Lichtenstein A14). In exchange for immunity on drug possession charges, Nicholson's live-in girlfriend Anjelica Huston, who arrived home as the crime was being committed, agreed to testify against the director (McGilligan 298).[80]

Originally denying the charges against him, Polanski eventually accepted a plea bargain and on August 8th – the eve of the eighth anniversary of Sharon Tate's murder – plead guilty under oath to one count of "unlawful sexual intercourse." District Attorney John Van de Kamp had reluctantly offered the plea bargain, because Gailey's family did not want her to endure a trial (Leaming 178-179). By accepting the plea bargain, Polanski was assured that he would receive probation after undergoing a psychiatric evaluation (Polanski, *Roman* 408). "I couldn't come to terms with it; nothing in my life had prepared me for the idea that I might be a criminal," Polanski confesses. "It was like learning that I was the victim of a fatal but lingering disease, one from which there would be no merciful release" (399).

Although deemed by a team of psychiatrists to be an unlikely re-offender, Judge Laurence J. Rittenband, who was displeased with their report, ordered Polanski on September 19th to undergo ninety days of further psychiatric evaluation at the California Institute for Men at Chino (Leaming 184-187). After forty-two days at Chino, Polanski was released for sentencing, but he soon received word that Judge Rittenband had

decided against accepting the plea bargain and intended to send him back to prison for an indeterminate amount of time and then arrange to have him deported (Polanski, *Roman* 422-423).[81] "The judge was getting a great deal of pressure and he was concerned about criticism in the press," Gailey's attorney Lawrence Silver explains. "He was going to sentence Polanski, rather than to time served, to fifty years. What the judge did was outrageous. We had agreed to a plea bargain and the judge had approved it" (Douglas 183).

Realizing that additional prison time was inevitable, Polanski fled the United States on February 1, 1978 and relocated to France, where he could not be extradited due to his naturalized citizen status. "I think of coming back very often," Polanski told *The New York Times* in 1980. "I said I would do it and I will. Not to live in the United States but to resolve my legal problems" (Harmetz C19). He has never returned. Though able to live and work freely in France, Polanski has never been able to escape the stigma of being a victimizer, which, according to his victim, is "his form of punishment in itself." "I think everyone finding out about it when you're a celebrity that's a high price to pay in itself," Gailey asserts (Geimer, Interview n.pag). To the amazement of many observers, Gailey blames the media more than Polanski for her victimization:

> I don't carry feelings of anger towards Polanski. I even have some sympathy for him, what with his mother dying in a concentration camp and then his wife Sharon Tate being murdered by Charles Manson's people and spending the last 20 years as a fugitive. Life was hard for him, just like it was for me. He did something really gross to me, but it was the media that ruined my life.
>
> Even now, so-called experts are using my situation on TV talk shows to push their own points, which have nothing to do with how I feel. Twenty years ago everything said about me was horrible. But these days it's not fashionable to bad-mouth the victim. Now I'm all ready to stand up and defend myself and everyone is saying "oh, you poor thing." But I'm not a poor thing. And I can't oblige everyone by becoming freaked out and upset just to make things sound more

> interesting. If Polanski comes back—fine. That would at least end it. It will never be over until that happens. (Morton 160)

Polanski's status as a sex offender and a fugitive from justice put his career in serious jeopardy. "Of course, it changed my career," Polanski asserts. "It enormously reduced my opportunities. It cut off my contacts with the heart of the cinema industry" (Ansen 58). As with the Tate murder case eight years earlier, Polanski found himself the victim of a hostile press intent on condemning him for both his sexual escapades and the dark nature of his films. "Roman's got such a bad reputation for being a pervert film maker," Polanski's former agent Bill Tennant insists. "[H]e's going to be judged guilty by his work" ("Roman Polanski's Tawdry" 22). He needed both a commercial and critical success to help restore his tarnished reputation.

For his first post-arrest project, Polanski turned to producers Claude Berri and Timothy Burrill to finance *Tess* (1979), a lavish $12 million adaptation of Thomas Hardy's Victorian novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Despite having already filmed a literary classic with *Macbeth*, *Tess* was considered a risky departure for the director, because of its limited box-office appeal and the fact that he was still too closely associated with thrillers such as *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown*. "I just felt a strong desire to return to basic and universal human emotions," Polanski confesses. "I had already tackled the horror-film and detective-story genres. I wanted to do a love story, and *Tess* is a fantastic love story" (Behr 125).

Polanski felt a close personal connection to *Tess*, because Tate had introduced him to the novel shortly before her death, and expressed interest in having him direct her in the title role. As a tribute to her memory, Polanski included the words "To Sharon" at the end of the film's opening credits. "I thought of doing such a thing from the time of

her death, but I was waiting for the *proper* film," Polanski says. "I couldn't dedicate *Macbeth* to someone who died in that circumstance, or my comedy, *What?* or *Chinatown*. I'm sorry she can't enjoy it" (Harmetz C19).

However, instead of reviewing the film as a love letter to his late wife, some critics perceived it as "more an act of atonement than of creation" (Schickel, "Atonement" 73). The film's tragic tale of a poor Dorset farm girl, Tess Durbeyfield (Nastassia Kinski), who is forced to exile herself from society after being raped by an older man (Leigh Lawson), was too similar to Polanski's sex scandal for critics to keep from suggesting parallels. While many in the press avoided controversy and simply reviewed the film in terms of its faithfulness to Hardy's novel,[82] others "pointed nastily and repeatedly to the coincidence of [Polanski's] having made a film about a young girl's seduction by an older man, while he himself faced criminal charges for a similar offense" (Maslin C8). Jane Marcus of *Jump Cut* went so far as to accuse the director of making "A Tess for Child Molestors":

> A film-maker can take liberties with a novel or a play and sometimes can succeed in winning a new audience for an old tale, as, my teenagers tell me, [Franco] Zeffirelli wins adolescents to *Romeo and Juliet* [(1968)] because he appeals to their own instincts for feuding and loving. But Roman Polanski takes liberties with Hardy's book the way Alec d'Urberville takes liberties with Tess.
>
> Thomas Hardy's characters may be victims of fate, but they are never willing victims. They shake their fists at the gods, and Tess of the d'Urbervilles is no exception. Polanski's film is a long, slow rape by the scriptwriter of Thomas Hardy's text, a long, slow rape by the camera of Natassia [sic] Kinski's lovely face, and a long, slow rationalisation by the rapist imagination that that's how it is with helpless, hopeless victims. They never fight back. (90)

Not surprisingly, Polanski was angered by the implications that the film was semi-autobiographical and an apology for his sexual indiscretions. "That is total insanity," Polanski insists. "I am not begging forgiveness with it. It has always been a

beautiful, tragic love story. Everyone is attracted by love, and I tried to make a film that is romantic, even sentimental" (Glazer 41). While Polanski may believe that the film has no connection to his personal life, Paul J. Niemeyer insists that it is "impossible" to separate the two:

> Certainly, it is nearly impossible to divorce Polanski's personal circumstances from *Tess* because they directly affected its look: *Tess* had to be shot in Normandy instead of in England, from which Polanski could have been extradited; and Polanski himself pushes a personal identification with the material by beginning with the on-screen dedication, "To Sharon." ... The film of *Tess* openly invites itself to be read in three ways: as an apology (in both senses of the word) for Polanski's life and previous films, as a valediction for Sharon Tate, and as a reminder that Polanski himself is a victim both of the Manson family and of the fallout from his sexual behavior. These personal identifications are so strong that it is fairly easy to take Hardy altogether out of the picture (so to speak) and consider the film entirely to be "Polanski's *Tess*." (124)

Polanski is partially correct in his assertions that *Tess* is not an apology, but not for the reasons that he states. Even if he were "begging forgiveness," the film does not reflect any contrition, because the character of Tess projects the director's life more than those of her victimizers, Alec d'Urberville (Lawson) and Angel Clare (Peter Firth). Like Polanski, Tess is a victim misunderstood by society, who is forced into self-exile and eventually, out of passion, is compelled to commit an act of victimization: she murders her lover d'Urberville to return to her husband Clare. Because Polanski privileges Tess as victim, instead of recognizing Tess' role as a victimizer, he distorts the story and invites criticism. Once again, he would have to defend himself – and *Tess*.

During the publicity campaign for *Tess*, Polanski remarked that he no longer desired to test the boundaries of what is permissible onscreen. "A decade ago, I was promoting realism. I did scenes of violence and sex because the general hypocrisy didn't allow that," Polanski reasoned to *The New York Times*. By filming *Tess*, which he hailed

as the film of his "mature years" (Harmetz C19), Polanski believed he had grown as a filmmaker and was now capable of showing more restraint. Yet, for a director often condemned as an *enfant terrible*, Polanski found himself taken to task when he strayed from his usual filmmaking style and tried a more mainstream approach. While *Tess* was criticized as being an unnecessary apology for his sex scandal and his so-called "perverse" films, his subsequent features – the long-awaited comedy *Pirates* (1986) and the Hitchcockian thriller *Frantic* (1988) – were found to be pedestrian and boring for most critics' tastes. "There was no blood and gore and none of Polanski's original, authentic weirdness," biographer John Parker says of *Frantic*. "Those who were familiar with his work would be reminded of his real talent as one of the modern masters of *film noir* and the thriller" (259).

After the poor reception to these films, Polanski would return to familiar controversial territory with *Bitter Moon* (1992). A black comedy about the boundaries of sex and victimization – penned by Polanski, Gérard Brach, and John Brownjohn (based on Pascal Bruckner's French novel *Lunes de Fiel*)[83] – the film would not only poke fun at his notorious reputation both on and off-screen, but also serve as a partial apology for his past mistakes, such as his statutory rape of Samantha Gailey.

In celebration of their seventh wedding anniversary, an English Eurobond dealer Nigel Dobson (Hugh Grant) and his wife Fiona (Kristin Scott Thomas) set sail on an ocean liner en route to Istanbul, where they will then board a flight to Bombay. Although they appear to be content on the surface, both are having serious doubts about whether their marriage can survive. As with George (Donald Pleasence) in *Cul-de-Sac* (1966), who moved to the secluded "Rob Roy" in the foolish hope of strengthening his unloving

marriage, Nigel and Fiona are clouded by the belief that a second honeymoon in India will rekindle their dying flame.

After Fiona retires for the evening, Nigel has a nightcap in the ship's lounge and leers at a young French blonde, Mimi (Emmanuelle Seigner), dancing provocatively on the dance floor. He recognizes her as the seasick woman that he and his wife attended to earlier in the day. Attracted to her beauty and overt sexuality, Nigel betrays Fiona by beginning to flirt with Mimi, but his weak attempts at humor – including unfunny cultural stereotypes, which would not likely even amuse *Chinatown*'s J.J. "Jake" Gittes (Jack Nicholson) – do not arouse her interest. "You're too funny for me, Nigel. I'm choking with laughter," Mimi remarks caustically. "So long. I leave you to your magnetic, irresistible personality."

Feeling confused and rejected, Nigel is soon approached by Mimi's irascible, wheelchair-bound husband, Oscar Benton (Peter Coyote). Oscar warns Nigel to "beware" of Mimi and asks him if he is sexually attracted to her. "You'd like to fuck her," Oscar frankly asserts. "Admit it. It's no crime." After a heated exchange, in which Nigel unconvincingly denies all interest in Mimi, Oscar invites him back to his cabin for a friendly chat. "I don't know you at all, Nigel, but somehow I have the feeling that you're exactly the listener that I've been looking for," Oscar admits. "I hope you'll find my story interesting. I realize it's hard to relate to something that doesn't concern you. Or, maybe, it already does."

A repulsed yet intrigued Nigel listens to Oscar – a middle-aged, American expatriate writer living off his trust fund in Paris – as he recounts in a melodramatic narration how he "had been granted a glimpse of heaven…" when he met Mimi on a bus

between Montparnasse and Porte des Lilas. Shown in flashback, before his paralysis, Oscar finds himself sitting next to the beautiful teenager, who has boarded without a pass, and aids her by slipping her his ticket, all the while knowing that doing so will get him kicked off. Longing to be reunited with his "sorceress in white sneakers," Oscar rides the same bus route day after day hoping to find Mimi, to no avail. They are not reunited until fate has her waiting on his restaurant table as he dines with another young woman. Feeling no obligation to his date, who he picked up in a boutique only moments earlier, Oscar abandons her and arranges to have dinner with Mimi.

In this brief moment in the restaurant, Oscar first exhibits a self-centered, callous nature, which only intensifies throughout the film. His cruel treatment of the boutique worker, whom he leaves alone at the table while he pursues someone more desirable, illustrates a sexist attitude that women are little more than disposable sexual toys. While he has an insatiable desire for female company, Oscar has no interest in a long-term monogamous relationship – heaven to him is simply Paris' never-ending supply of "fluttering skirts" and "fleeting affairs." Oscar's hedonistic, promiscuous lifestyle mirrors the kind that Polanski enjoyed throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. During this period, Polanski became a fixture at London's Playboy Club and embraced the sexually permissive way of life that its sister publication promoted. "At that time I was really swinging," Polanski remembers. "All I was interested in was to fuck a girl and move on" (Leaming 75). According to biographer Thomas Kiernan, women found him desirable, because he had "an undisguisable boyish appeal that was made up of a combination of forced arrogance and innate timidity" (202).

Excited by his latest potential conquest, Oscar picks up Mimi the following evening at the Centre du Marais, where she is studying to become a dancer. "I was so wound up I'd gotten there a whole half-hour early," Oscar admits. "My nerve ends were jangling like bells." Constantly giggling like a couple of teenagers in love, Oscar and Mimi spend the entire evening talking with one another. After returning to Oscar's flat, the child-like nymphet seduces Oscar by the firelight over hot chocolate and croissants. She provides him with a sexual "awakening" unlike anything he has ever experienced. "Nothing ever surpassed the rapture of that first awakening," Oscar says gleefully. "I might have been Adam with the taste of apple fresh in my mouth. I was looking at all the beauty in the world embodied in a single female form and I knew, with sudden blinding certainty, this was it."

Anyone familiar with Polanski's sex scandal and his known infatuation with young women would be hard pressed *not* to be reminded of the Samantha Gailey incident, while watching the early scenes of Oscar and Mimi's relationship. Although the audience does not know Mimi's age – probably somewhere between her late teens and early twenties – she is portrayed as a giddy schoolgirl, who wears short dresses and enjoys playing hopscotch, riding carousels, and having a middle-aged man win stuffed animals for her at carnivals. These images become even more alarming when they are accompanied by Oscar's voiceover narration: "There was a freshness and innocence about her. An almost disconcerting blend of sexual maturity and childish naïveté that touched my world-weary heart and effaced the age difference between us."

Oscar and Mimi soon move in together and become inseparable. Mimi even goes so far as to quit her job, so she can spend every waking moment with him. After several

months together, however, the couple's bedroom antics become too mundane for Oscar. "Mimi's face still held a thousand mysteries for me – her body a thousand sweet promises," Oscar confesses. "But lurking at the back of my mind was an unspoken fear that we'd already scaled the heights of our relationship, that it would all be downhill from now on. And then something happened." In graphically lurid detail, Oscar recounts to Nigel how he and Mimi took their relationship to a "totally different plane" that would test the boundaries of taste and decency:

> We were at Kitzbuhel, a skiing vacation. I'd rented a chalet there. It was one of those nights. Warm and cozy inside. Great, fat snowflakes drifting down in the blackness beyond the frosted planes. No light but the glow from the set. Mimi on the floor wearing a T-shirt and nothing else, watching some old American soap dubbed into German, and me on the couch watching her sprawled in a sort of boozy stupor. All at once she got up, stalked over to the set, spread her legs, and pissed on the screen like she wanted to blot it out. Time stood still for an instant, and then I rolled off the couch. I crawled over like a lunatic. I wormed my way between her legs, and I turned over. And right way I was engulfed with this warm, golden cascade. It spattered my cheeks. It filled my nostrils. It stung my eyes. And then something jolted my brain with multi-megavolt intensity. There was this blinding flash in the back of my eyeballs. I experienced the orgasm of a lifetime.

The graphic perversity of Oscar's story becomes too uncomfortable for his straight-laced listener to handle. "For God's sake man!" Nigel protests. "Look, I think I'm probably as broad-minded as the next man. But, I mean, obviously, there are limits." An argument between the two ensues with Nigel judging Oscar and Mimi's relationship to be "obscene." To this accusation, Oscar takes serious exception: "Obscene? Have you ever felt real, overpowering passion? Have you ever truly idolized a woman? Nothing can be obscene in such a love. Everything that occurs between you becomes a sacrament, don't you see?"

Oscar cites the incident at the ski lodge as their "sexual Rubicon" and reveals that it "opened up all sorts of new possibilities." From this moment forward, the lovers overindulge in sadomasochistic sex, and act out their darkest fantasies with a vast assortment of whips, chains, and lubricants. During their sexual role-playing games – reminiscent of the interplay between George and Teresa (Françoise Dorléac) in *Cul-de-Sac* – Mimi victimizes him by means of sexual humiliation. However, unlike George who underneath the surface resents the abuse, Oscar finds it all exciting. "I always had a suspicion it might be supremely pleasurable to be humiliated by a beautiful woman," Oscar says, "but it was only now I realized what this could entail."

With these words, Polanski shows the unsettling sight of Oscar handcuffed to a chair with his mouth gagged by Mimi's adhesive sanitary napkin. Mimi, who is dressed as a dominatrix in black leather, cuts away his trousers and boxer shorts with a straight razor, before kicking him to the floor and having her way with him. The scene is an unabashedly perverse male fantasy, but Polanski narrowly keeps from crossing the line of good taste by adding doses of black humor. The absurdity of the couple's sex life reaches greater heights a few scenes later, when Oscar crawls on the floor wearing a pig mask, while Mimi chases him around the bedroom like a barnyard animal. "How dare you try to fuck me, you filthy beast!" Mimi yells as she lashes him with a whip.

Oscar and Mimi do not mind being sexually humiliated in the most demeaning ways imaginable, since they are both willing victims, who view the abuse as an expression of each other's love and devotion. Instead, they only feel truly victimized when they fear their partner is being unfaithful. Feeling hurt when she sees Oscar flirting with her ex-roommate Cindy (Olivia Brunaux) at a nightclub, Mimi returns the pain by

making him feel jealous as she seductively dances with her former classmate Basil (Heavon Grant) on the dance floor. "I'd always found infidelity the most titillating aspect of any relationship. That scene should have turned me on," Oscar confesses. "So why didn't it? Why did I feel so hurt?" He fails to realize that he feels victimized because Mimi's infidelity leaves him impotent. Being a writer, Oscar wanted to pen every aspect of their relationship, but he now sees that he cannot.

Realizing that possessing her is impossible, Oscar starts to lose his attraction to Mimi. "There she would lie – gorgeous, voluptuous…and it didn't do a thing for me," Oscar says. "I came to resent her failure to excite me the way she used to." With their sex life faltering, Oscar and Mimi cannot relate to each other. They are unable to discuss their feelings of displeasure, because their love was built on lust instead of communication. These unresolved feelings of pain manifest into acts of verbal and physical abuse.

After a series of terrible arguments, including a violent one where he knocks her unconscious, Oscar breaks off their relationship by explaining that they should not be "demeaning" themselves anymore. "But I love you," Mimi pleads. "All I want is you. I want to marry you. I want to give you babies. I want to give you the rest of my life." Her desires are of no concern to the coldly unsympathetic Oscar: "I don't want the rest of your life. I want my own." The couple separates, but soon Mimi returns crying and pleading for him to take her back:

> Please, don't throw me out. Give me one last chance. I'm ready to live with you on any terms, any at all. I can bear anything as long as I'm with you sometimes. You can shout at me. You can hit me. You can have other women. I don't care what you do, but please don't send me away! Even if you don't love me anymore, keep me with you out of pity. There's nothing I wouldn't do to stay with you. Please! Please! Please! I beg you.

As she lies at his feet begging, Oscar gets a devilish grin and lights a cigarette. Understanding that she is completely dependent on him emotionally, he realizes the fun that he could have victimizing her. "Everyone has a sadistic streak. Nothing brings it out better than the knowledge you've got someone at your mercy," Oscar candidly admits. "If she really fancied living in a living hell, I'd make it so hot, even she would want out."

Getting more than she bargained for, Mimi finds herself emotionally abused and humiliated by Oscar at every turn. Not possessing the strength to fight back, she sits helplessly as Oscar callously dates other women; ridicules her in public; and even calls out her ex-roommate Cindy's name during sex. Although he thoroughly enjoys regaining power over her, Oscar admits that abusing her is too easy. "I'd achieved the impossible," Oscar says. "She was losing her looks and her figure, wasting away, breaking out in nervous rashes, developing spots." His victimization of her reaches its zenith when she becomes pregnant. Oscar forces Mimi to have an abortion and abandons her on a flight to Martinique.

His refusal to allow Mimi to give birth to their baby is twofold: not only does he fear that fatherhood would curtail his swinging lifestyle, but he also fears his inability to commit to a family would only bring harm to a child. "Can you see us bringing up a child in this place?" Oscar asks his wife. "I'm pushing forty. I haven't even sold a single book yet. The world doesn't know I exist. Not a day goes by that I don't think it might be better just to kill myself and be done with it. Would it be fair to saddle a child with a father like this?"

This portrait of a struggling artist afraid of family bears a strong resemblance to Polanski, who expressed similar concerns when Tate begged him for a child. "To Sharon,

the prospect of a baby meant a chance to save her marriage, to reform her husband's troubling [adulterous] behavior,[84] and to finally settle down to the role which she had always wanted most: that of a wife and mother," Tate biographer Greg King writes (164). However, Polanski still harbored difficult memories of how the Holocaust tore apart his family:

> You know, I have always been afraid of that responsibility and this fear has to do with my upbringing—the times in which I grew up. I was living out of suitcases, family ties were something very risky, very shaky. For people living in America, the family is something very sound, very stable—relatively—compared to wartime and postwar Europe, because in Europe in those days the family could be torn away from you at any moment. (Ballad 92)

Although he eventually relented and slowly embraced the prospect of fatherhood, his fear of familial commitment only intensified after the murders of Tate and their unborn son. "[My childhood] left me with the feeling that family ties are not only frail, but a source of great suffering," Polanski stated in 1979. "I'd started losing this feeling with Sharon. But events have proved that nothing is stable, nothing lasts" (Behr 125).

Following his abandonment of Mimi, Oscar vows never again to enter into a monogamous relationship. "I hadn't dumped Mimi for one particular woman," Oscar asserts. "I'd swapped her for all womankind. And I resolved to make up for lost time." The novelist forgoes his writing and spends the next two years unabashedly jumping from one bed to the next,[85] but he eventually learns, very painfully, that "womankind" has as much concern for his well being as he has for theirs. After suffering a concussion and a fractured femur when struck by a bus, he lays for weeks in traction with no well-wishers at his bedside. "None of my conquests bothered to check if I was still breathing," Oscar laments. To his astonishment, Mimi – looking healthy and physically recovered from the "living hell" that he put her through – returns to pay him a visit, but he again

insists that she get out of his life. Unwilling to let him hurt her any longer, Mimi purposely causes injury to his back, so he will be permanently paralyzed from the waist down. Once he gets out of intensive care, she informs him that his paralysis is the "good news." "The bad news," Mimi warns, "is that from now on, I'm taking care of you."

Their roles as victim and victimizer are reversed when Mimi takes him home and administers her own devilish form of medical care. In the vein of both Baby Jane Hudson and Annie Wilkes – the maniacal nursemaids of *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962) and *Misery* (1990), respectively – Mimi emotionally and physically abuses the invalid Oscar by treating him with dirty needles; making him urinate on himself; and, in one sadistically funny scene, forcing him to crawl out of the bathtub and across the bedroom floor naked, shivering, and covered in soap suds, while she chews gum and chats on the phone. His inability to do anything for himself – most of all control her – leaves him feeling impotent and demasculinized. These feelings only intensify when he watches helplessly as Mimi makes love to her old classmate Basil. Unable to stand her victimizing him any longer, Oscar relents and marries Mimi, so they will possess each other forever. "We both knew we'd never rediscover the same extremes of passion and cruelty with another living soul," Oscar says. "We were like the survivors of a catastrophe so terrible it formed a bond between us shared by no one else in the world."

Considering Polanski's past mistreatment of women – most notably his infidelity to Tate and his statutory rape of Gailey – the scenes of Oscar's victimization by Mimi play as if they were born out the director's nightmare fantasies about his victims returning for revenge. When hearing Oscar utter the words, "I know I deserve all I get. I treated you like a monster. I am a monster," one feels as if he is also speaking for the

director himself. Although Mimi's stark similarities to Tate (a loving wife who put up with infidelity and feared her husband's reaction to her pregnancy)[86] and Gailey (a schoolgirl victimized by a middle-aged man) could be dismissed, it is difficult to do so when Polanski blurs the line between fact and fiction by casting his third wife, French model/actress Emmanuelle Seigner, as Mimi. Polanski's disturbing use of Seigner onscreen made some feel uneasy, including his first wife Barbara Kwiatkowska, who was cinematically victimized herself by Polanski by, reportedly, serving as the inspiration for the manipulative wife Teresa in *Cul-de-Sac*. "This sexual exhibitionism, as in the perversity of *Bitter Moon*, is something that has always bothered me," Kwiatkowska told biographer John Parker. "And that he should expose his own wife in this way makes me feel that I escaped some danger" (268).

According to Parker, Polanski believes *Bitter Moon* has little reflection to his past sins. "What [Polanski] had done in the movie, according to him, was touch strings that people would prefer to be left silent, because they recognized themselves in certain actions and attitudes," Parker writes. "His stance remained as vigorous as ever: that while not going to the extremes he might express in his films, everyone had done things that they preferred not to talk about..." (268).

Yet with *Bitter Moon*, Polanski seems to be lampooning his perceived image as an artist who publicly exposes his scandalous personal life through his work. Not only is Oscar's unfinished novel written verbatim from his love affair with Mimi, but the career advice given to him by a New York book agent (an unbilled Stockard Channing) echoes Polanski's self-imposed exile: "When are you going to come back home, back to the United States, where it's at?" Oscar serves as Polanski's onscreen alter ego: the

demented storyteller victimizing his audience with his perversity. In turn, Nigel and the viewer also become one, but the joke is on Polanski's audience. They, like Nigel, become complicit in their own victimization, because neither is willing to walk away from the tale. "You make me sick," Nigel says disgustedly. "Why are you still standing here?" Oscar retorts.

After Oscar finishes his tale, he encourages Nigel to have an affair with Mimi. Nigel has not wavered in his lustful desire for her. After discovering his wife passed out in their cabin from taking Dramamine,[87] Nigel abandons her to seduce Mimi at the ship's New Year's Eve party. He is shocked to discover that Mimi has no interest in him and has been playing him for a fool:

Nigel: But…I'm truly, sincerely in love with you.

Mimi: That's why you will never have me.

Nigel: You're hurting me terribly.

Mimi: The way you're hurting your wife?

Nigel: She doesn't know about us. She knows nothing.

Mimi: She's looking right at us.

Nigel turns around to find Oscar and Fiona watching them from the bar. Not only does Fiona discover that Nigel has been victimizing her, but Nigel discovers that Oscar and Mimi have been victimizing him as well by orchestrating the altercation. "I knew that your presence would add a little spice to tonight's proceedings," Oscar says to Fiona gleefully. "That was a very kind thought of yours. I've never seen my husband in action with another woman before," Fiona replies. Since they have ceased finding new ways to hurt each other, Oscar and Mimi have turned to victimizing others for their sadistic

thrills. By ruining what was left of Nigel and Fiona's marriage by turning them into reflections of themselves, Oscar and Mimi have made the complete circle from victimizers to victims and back to victimizers again.

Fiona repays Nigel's adultery in kind by having an affair with Mimi. Already feeling demasculinized when he finds them in bed together asleep, Nigel is further humiliated by Oscar, who shares his first-hand account of the sexual fireworks. "You really missed something Nigel," Oscar says. "Fiona was a revelation. All fire. I doubt if you've ever really made the most of her." Wanting to strangle Oscar for the pain that he has caused him, Nigel lunges for his throat, but Oscar quickly pulls a gun on him. Nigel pleads for him to put the gun down before someone gets hurt. "Hurt somebody?" Oscar asks himself. "No, not anymore." With those words, Oscar kills Mimi by firing two shots into her as she sleeps. "We were just too greedy, baby. That was all," Oscar cries out, before turning the gun on himself.[88]

Like the married couple, Andrzej (Leon Niemczyk) and Christine (Jolanta Umecka), in Polanski's *Knife in the Water* (1962), Nigel and Fiona must now decide whether their marriage can survive the pain they have inflicted on each other. In the film's last scene, the grief stricken couple holds each other on the ship's deck as Dr. Singh's little daughter approaches them. "My father says to wish you a Happy New Year," Amrita says. The young girl represents the missing key that prevented *Bitter Moon*'s two married couples from having successful marriages. As Dr. Singh told Fiona the day before, "children are a better form of marital therapy than any trip to India." Although not a complete happy ending, the image of Amrita teaches Nigel and Fiona that another form of love – not just sex – is necessary to make a marriage survive. Evidently,

Polanski had learned this lesson from his new marriage to Seigner, whom he married in 1989, which resulted in both a daughter, Morgane, and a son, Elvis. According to Polanski's friends, Morgane and Elvis gave him a new outlook on life. "Having children apparently changed him..." Jack Nicholson says. "It does change things" (Douglas 342).

As was the case with Polanski's previous ventures into comedic cruelty – namely *Cul-de-Sac*, *What?*, and *The Tenant – Bitter Moon* was greeted with little fanfare when the film premiered in the United States in 1994. Echoing the false yet popular opinion that the director's best work was behind him, most American critics agreed with *The Washington Post*'s Desson Howe, who proclaimed that Polanski was "off his creative rocker..." (D2):

> There seems to be a joke to all this, but it's not clear what the punch line is: Has Polanski had it with Hollywood, or the creative process, or even his wife, Seigner? Is he just a dirty old man rallying himself creatively, in the spirit of the Marquis de Sade? Or did he—midway through this project—realize how difficult it is to interweave humor and drama (especially with less-than-assured Seigner in a principal role) and allow himself the ultimate artistic pleasure of self-sabotage? (D1-D2)

Unwilling to view the film as a possible cathartic first-step in recognizing and learning from his past mistakes, critics accused Polanski of exploiting Seigner and wallowing in perversity. "Eighteenth-century aristos used to devise court entertainments in which they exhibited their mistresses in the nude," Stanley Kauffmann of *The New Republic* writes. "Polanski emulates" ("Triple Grant" 25). Joe Brown of *The Washington Post* went even further by stating, "Polanski's film smacks of wish-fulfillment and self-justification. He's like one of those men's-magazine sexologists forever surfacing with research 'proving' that monogamy and marriage are doomed to fail" (45). One of *Bitter Moon*'s few supporters was *The Chicago Sun-Times*' Roger

Ebert, who used his review to berate his contemporaries for their prudish reaction to the film:

> The returns are in from Europe and the coasts, and the critics have found Roman Polanski's *Bitter Moon* an embarrassment: It is too melodramatic, too contrived, too overwrought, too overacted. Polanski has come unhinged. His portrait of a doomed marriage may be high porn but it is low art.
>
> ... It is the easiest thing in the world to walk out of a movie like *Bitter Moon* shaking our heads wearily and complaining about Polanski's bad taste, grotesque situations and fevered imagination. The purpose, of course, is to prove that *we* didn't fall for it: That we are much too mature, serious and well-balanced to be taken in by his juvenile fantasizing. Well, of course *Bitter Moon* is wretched excess. But Polanski directs it without compromise or apology, and it's a funny thing how critics may condescend to it, but while they're watching it you could hear a pin drop. ("*Moon* Seduces" 24)

After the unenthusiastic reception to *Bitter Moon*, Polanski forged ahead with another study of sexual victimization with the psychological thriller *Death and the Maiden* (1994). Based on the play by fellow exile Ariel Dorfman, who personally adapted his work for the screen with Rafael Yglesias, the film tells the story of Paulina Escobar (Sigourney Weaver) – the wife of a South American lawyer (Stuart Wilson) – who has been living with the painful scars of being raped and tortured by members of a fascist regime years earlier. One evening her husband is driven home in a rainstorm by a passerby, Dr. Roberto Miranda (Ben Kingsley), who found him along the side of the road with a flat tire. Paulina believes Dr. Miranda is the physician who oversaw and participated in her victimization, so she kidnaps him and tries to force him to admit to his crimes. Dr. Miranda maintains his innocence, but nothing he says will convince the revenge-seeking Paulina otherwise. "What can I say? What do you want me to say?" a horrified Dr. Miranda pleads. "If I'm guilty, you'll kill me. If I'm innocent, you'll kill me." Paulina's husband and the audience are forced to decide whether she is telling the

truth or delusional due to her trauma. Ever the manipulative prankster, Polanski ensured this ambiguity by having each of his performers possess opposing views of the truth. Before beginning production, Polanski asked Kingsley whether he thought his character was guilty. "I said, 'Roman, you know. She's got the wrong guy,'" the actor recalled to James Lipton on *Inside the Actors Studio* in 2002. "He said, 'Good. Don't tell the others. Lets go and shoot it'" (Kingsley).

Although a modest critical success, *Death and the Maiden* did little to reestablish Polanski's clout at the box-office. The film's political overtones[89] and cast of excellent yet unbankable stars were a tough sell for mainstream audiences, who in 1994 were flocking to get their usual dose of escapist action films (*Speed* and *True Lies*) and comedies (*Ace Ventura, Pet Detective* and *The Flintstones*). There seemed to be little interest in the marketplace for Polanski's cinematic cruelty. The angry Vietnam-era audience that made *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown* big hits had been replaced by a content peacetime audience, who no longer felt victimized by the establishment. "To some extent, the American cinema of the 1980s and early 1990s can be viewed in terms of the social, political, and cultural landscape of the Reagan-Bush and Bush-Quayle political administrations," John Belton argues. "'Reaganite' entertainment, as the films of this period have been dubbed, is, in part, a cinema of reassurance, optimism, and nostalgia—qualities embodied in the political persona of Ronald Reagan" (375). The era represented the antithesis of Roman Polanski's dubious view of humankind.

V

THE ART OF SURVIVAL: *The Pianist* and the Redemption of Roman Polanski

It is cruel, you know, that music should be so beautiful. It has the beauty of loneliness & of pain: of strength & freedom. The beauty of disappointment & never-satisfied love. The cruel beauty of nature, and everlasting beauty of monotony.
– Benjamin Britten, British composer/pianist, letter 29 June 1937 (Mitchell, Donald 493)

Roman Polanski's fugitive status in America and relegation to working in Europe made it increasingly difficult for him to obtain financial backing from Hollywood studios and the services of their brightest stars. During the 1990s, Polanski missed out on directing a variety of big-budget studio films, including the forgettable *Chinatown* sequel *The Two Jakes* (1990),[90] the sexy voyeuristic thriller *Sliver* (1993), and the *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* revision *Mary Reilly* (1996).[91] Former colleague Robert Evans had desperately wanted Polanski for *Sliver*, which was based on the best-selling novel by *Rosemary's Baby* scribe Ira Levin. Evans believed "[t]he Polanski touch could make *Sliver* a genre classic," but Paramount Pictures would not hear of it. "I might as well have talked to the trees," Evans recalls (409-410).

Despite these disappointments, Polanski was hired by Mandalay Entertainment in 1996 to direct the black comedy/thriller *The Double* – loosely based on the short story by Fyodor Dostoevsky – which was to star John Travolta as an American living in Paris, who finds himself followed by his own double.[92] The popular Travolta, who was hot off the success of *Pulp Fiction* (1994), seemed to be exactly what Polanski needed to return to the Hollywood A-list. However, shortly before cameras were set to roll, Travolta walked off the set and brought the production to a sudden halt. Rumors circulated that the actor refused to do a nude scene that Polanski had unexpectedly added to the script.

"Roman added it for no reason," Travolta told the French publication *Paris-Match*. "And what's more, I have never acted naked in my whole career, and it's not now that I'm fat that I'm going to start" (Copeland para. 2). The actor was also apparently angered by Polanski's authoritarian style of direction. "At the first reading, Roman didn't like my acting," Travolta confesses. "He told me I was bad and showed me what I should do" (para. 4).

Polanski had a well-known reputation for closely molding his actors' performances and, if necessary, bullying them to get what he wanted.[93] "Roman's notion of how to get a wonderful performance out of an actor is to tell the actor exactly what to do and exactly how to do it. Point by point. Item by item. No detail too small," producer Thom Mount insists ("Roman Polanski: Reflections"). While this auteurist direction may have been accepted in years past, it was less tolerated by Hollywood's current generation of savvy producers and egocentric stars with their own production companies and high-power agents. Since Polanski's departure from Hollywood in 1978, directors had started to lose the power and independence they gained during the late 1960s. "The new megaproducers didn't want to use New Hollywood veterans...because these directors were too powerful, independent, and costly," Peter Biskind reasons. "The producers were the auteurs – of crash-and-burn action pictures – but their medium was not so much film as money" (*Easy Riders* 414). Film craftsmen were again preferred over auteurs, because they offered little opposition and enabled the Hollywood machine to keep churning out rehashes of past cinematic glories. "Movies are made in cycles and recycled as remakes," J. Hobermen laments. "Anything sold once can be sold again...and again" (230).

Not only were his directorial methods becoming outdated, but critics were questioning whether Polanski's style of cinematic storytelling was becoming passé as well. With the release of his tongue-in-cheek, supernatural horror film *The Ninth Gate* (1999) – based on the novel *El Club Dumas* by Arturo Perez-Reverte – American critics declared that Polanski had hit rock bottom. The film, which concerned an unscrupulous book detective's (Johnny Depp) efforts to track down the last two remaining copies of a rare satanic text for a demonology expert (Frank Langella), was perceived by many as the director's desperate attempt to have a box-office success by cribbing elements from his past classics.[94] "In adapting the European slight-fright best seller *El Club Dumas*, Mr. Polanski is out to cross *Rosemary's Baby* [(1968)] with his saucy spoof *The Fearless Vampire Killers* [(1967)], but this movie is about as scary as a sock-puppet re-enactment of *The Blair Witch Project* [(1999)], and not nearly as funny," Elvis Mitchell of *The New York Times* wrote. "Mr. Polanski's reflexes are gone, so all he can do is watch the camera pass gracefully from set to set" (E22).

In his 2001 essay "The Old Masters: Kubrick, Polanski, and the Late Style in Modern Cinema," James Morrison draws parallels between Polanski's *The Ninth Gate* and Stanley Kubrick's swansong *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). Morrison finds both to possess a "late style" – not unlike the late films of long departed "old masters" such as George Cukor (*Justine*, 1969), Howard Hawks (*Man's Favorite Sport?*, 1964), and Vincente Minnelli (*Goodbye Charlie*, 1964) – with Kubrick and Polanski straining to be modern:

> ...the negative responses to the films seem to me to be a direct consequence of—though perhaps an unconscious reaction to—the particular qualities of *belatedness* that these films signal. On the one hand, these films amply represent modern currents in cinema: in one way or another, both make use of bankable stars, high-concept strategies, and cutting-edge technologies, including the so-called digital ones that are supposed to render cinema obsolete. Yet if these movies are

> resolutely international, they still don't seem to be a part of the *global* atmospheres or hegemonies of modern film—they're too hermetic, too private, to bid for that kind of commercialism, even if they adopt some of its trappings.
>
> ...The films culminate themes of fetishism or sexual fantasy and paranoia that have run through their makers' work, but here more than ever, these themes are treated with a remote, formal attitude. To push the Flaubertian parallel further, *The Ninth Gate* in its mannered, fanciful perversity could be seen as Polanski's *Temptation of St. Anthony*, while *Eyes Wide Shut* in its genteel sexual exoticism could be seen as Kubrick's *Salammbo*. But if Polanski or Kubrick ever felt *personally* implicated in the themes their work has explored, then on the evidence of these films, they don't any longer. (45-47)

Although Kubrick's unexpected death in 1999 prevented him from getting a second chance to prove his critics wrong, the ever-resilient Polanski would get another opportunity in 2002. In an ironical twist, Polanski would have to return to the past to move forward.

Following his brief exercise in commercialism with *The Ninth Gate*, Polanski wanted to do something more meaningful. "I want to do a movie which is more serious and more personal, somehow related to my own life, rather sad but not depressing," Polanski told *Variety* at a cocktail party celebrating *The Ninth Gate*'s opening (Zecchinelli 144). Long having wanted to make a film about the Holocaust, Polanski chose to direct *The Pianist*, which was based on real-life pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman's 1946 memoir *Death of a City*.[95]

The production was considered a risky undertaking, since it would be following in the footsteps of several Holocaust films – most notably *Schindler's List* (1993) – that were released to great acclaim during the preceding decade. Ironically, Polanski had turned down Steven Spielberg's offer to direct *Schindler's List* years earlier. Polanski explains his reasons:

> *Schindler's List* was really about the Krakow ghetto. That's where I was. To do a film about that particular ghetto and the people who went with Schindler, it's too close on one hand and too far on the other. Too close because it deals with the days and with things with walls with streets that I know intimately. And too far because it deals with this group of people who were saved by working for Schindler. If I were to go through the pain of recreating it all, I would rather go and do something about my own childhood, about my own persona, and the people around me. (Polanski, Interview with Mark Cousins)

Since *Schindler's List* centered its tale on the redemption of German factory owner Oskar Schindler and mostly showed the Jewish people as anonymous victims, it is not difficult to understand why Polanski would instead opt to make *The Pianist*. Szpilman's story not only bore a close resemblance to Polanski's childhood experiences, but it illustrated the complexities of Jews and gentiles as both victims and victimizers. As Wolf Biermann explains in his epilogue for the 1999 republication of *Death of a City* – re-titled *The Pianist: The Extraordinary True Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945* – Szpilman's story "contained too many painful truths about the collaboration of defeated Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians and Jews with the German Nazis" (Szpilman 212).

As the Germans begin attacking Warsaw in 1939, Wladyslaw "Wladek" Szpilman (Adrien Brody) – a Polish Jew regarded as "the greatest pianist in Poland, maybe the whole world" – sits playing Frédéric Chopin's *Nocturne in C-sharp Minor*, live on Polish Radio. The beauty of his music is suddenly interrupted by an explosion that tears though the studio. Not understanding what is happening, Wladek returns home to find his family frantically packing their belongings. He learns that the Polish government is demanding that all able bodied men leave the city and set up a new line of defense across the river. Wladek adamantly refuses and declares that he is "staying put." "Don't be ridiculous. We've got to keep together," his mother (Maureen Lipman) says. "If I'm going to die, I prefer to die in my own home," Wladek replies.

The Szpilman family soon rejoices when they hear over the radio that both Great Britain and France have declared war on Nazi Germany. "Poland is no longer alone," the news commentator announces. The family immediately stops packing and cooks a lavish dinner to celebrate. Their jubilation, however, is short lived. After showing the Szpilmans proposing a toast to Great Britain and France, Polanski immediately cuts to them watching helplessly as the German Army marches through war torn Warsaw. By naively believing that the Allies would protect them from German invasion, the Szpilmans miss their opportunity to seek safety outside the city.

The family's misjudgment to stay in Warsaw – despite the obvious threat of German invasion – is reminiscent of the decision made by Polanski's family to move to Krakow shortly before the beginning of World War II. At the time of the director's birth in 1933, his Jewish parents, Ryszard and Bula (Katz) Polanski, were living in Paris and trying to integrate their family into French culture. "Anxious to invest their child with a French cachet, my parents had registered me at birth as 'Raymond,' which they erroneously assumed to be the French equivalent of Roman, a common enough Polish name," Polanski writes in his autobiography (Polanski, *Roman* 12). By 1936, however, Ryszard moved his family back to his native Poland. The move was a curious one, according to biographer Thomas Kiernan, because "by then, [Adolf] Hitler was talking about forcibly annexing Poland and, among other things, ridding it of its large Jewish population" (20). The Germans invaded just three years later. There is no definitive answer to why Ryszard ignored the warning signs and moved his family back to Poland. "Like it was five minutes to 12 when we went back to Poland," Polanski recalled in 1971.

"Why did we go back? I'm too embarrassed to ask my father. It was the wrong move" (Weinraub 72).

In *The Pianist*, once the Germans seize Warsaw, the Polish Jews are forced to obey a series of new laws designed to oppress their people. The Germans show no mercy and victimize them with both cold hatred (e.g., the slapping of Wladek's father by an officer for not bowing and for walking on the sidewalk instead of in the gutter) and devilish delight (e.g., two soldiers forcing a group of Jews to dance in the street for their own enjoyment). The Szpilman family is sharply divided in their reaction to this victimization. While Wladek's parents submit to the abuse with little resistance, his siblings, particularly his older brother Henryk (Ed Stoppard), remain defiant. This dividedness is illustrated when the family learns from the newspaper that all Jewish citizens over the age of twelve will be required to wear white armbands bearing a blue Star of David. "Doesn't it say we have to provide these armbands ourselves? Where will we get them?" the father asks. "We're not going to get them. We're not going to wear them," Henryk sternly insists. Despite these adamant assertions, Henryk and his sisters, Halina (Jessica Kate Meyer) and Regina (Julia Rayner), soon give in to this demeaning form of branding, realizing that resisting only brings about more pain and suffering.

In addition to the abuse inflicted upon them by the Germans, the Polish Jews are also victimized by many Christian Poles, who want to ingratiate themselves to their foreign occupiers. As Wladek and his new girlfriend, Dorota (Emilia Fox), walk to the Paradiso for coffee, they are rudely greeted with a sign proclaiming "No Jews." Dorota – a Polish gentile herself – cannot believe that her fellow countrymen would do something

so "disgraceful," but Wladek tries to reason away their hatred: "You know what people are like. They want to be better Nazis than Hitler."

While some Christian Poles are still willing to do business with the Jews, they only do so to profit off of the Jews' suffering. The Szpilman family learns this firsthand when they try and sell Wladek's piano to a Polish dealer, Mr. Lipa (Richard Ridings), to buy more food:

Mr. Lipa:	That's the price. That's what I'm offering. My advice is to accept. You won't get more from anyone else.
Regina:	But it's a Bechstein, Mr. Lipa.
Mr. Lipa:	Two thousand...and my advice is to take it. What are you gonna do when you're hungry, eat the piano?
Henryk:	Get out, you dirty bastard! [*Henryk picks him by the collar and tries to throw him out of the room.*]
Mr. Lipa:	What's the matter with you?
Henryk:	We'd rather give it away! Go on, get out!
Mr. Lipa:	Haven't you eaten today? What're you suffering from? You people are crazy. I'm doing you a favor. Two thousand, and I'm paying for the removal. I'm not even charging for the removal! You haven't eaten today. You're crazy.
Wladek:	Take it.

The heated argument between Henryk and Mr. Lipa recalls the confrontation between J.J. "Jake" Gittes (Jack Nicholson) and mortgage officer (Don Erickson) in the barbershop scene in *Chinatown* (1974). Both Mr. Lipa and the mortgage officer are portrayed as little more than legalized thieves, who make their livings stealing from the poor and downtrodden. The behavior of Mr. Lipa is even more contemptible, however, because

his remark, "*You people* are crazy," reveals his anti-Semitic bias against the Szpilmans' Jewish identity.

Living conditions go from bad to worse for the Szpilman family on October 31, 1940, when they, along with the city's 360,000 Polish Jews, are forced to move into a walled ghetto separating them from the rest of the population. In an example of victims turned victimizers, wealthier Jews refuse to help their poorer brethren, and instead use their money for further profit. Polanski shows disturbing images of Jewish merchants shooing off hungry children and ignoring the dying people in the streets. Their lack of humanity infuriates Henryk, who explains to Wladek how these profiteers are "making millions." "They bribe the guards. The guards turn a blind eye," Henryk tells him. "They're bringing in cartloads: food, tobacco, liquor, French cosmetics. And the poor are dying all around them, they don't give a damn." Wladek later observes their selfishness when he finds a job playing the piano in the Café Capri. In this exclusive restaurant, wealthy Jews are shown drinking wine, eating gourmet food, and joyfully conversing as if they did not have a care in the world.

Although they are of a middle-class background, the Szpilmans no longer have the money to improve their quality of life. However, a family acquaintance, Jewish policeman Itzak Heller (Roy Smiles), soon offers Wladek and Henryk an opportunity to help their family financially:

Heller: We're recruiting.

Henryk: Who's recruiting?

Heller: Don't be clever with me. I've come here as a friend. They're bringing Jews in from all over the country. Soon there'll be a half-million people in the ghetto. We need more Jewish police.

Henryk: Oh! More Jewish police. You mean you want me to beat up Jews with my truncheon and catch the Gestapo spirit. I see!

Heller: Somebody's got to do it, Henryk.

Henryk: But, why me? I thought you only recruited boys with rich fathers.

Wladek and Henryk flatly refuse to take Heller's offer. Even though they could use the extra money to buy more food for their families, they would prefer to starve than to aid the Germans in carrying out acts of victimization.

Wladek slowly comes to the realization that being solitary is the key to survival. He works hard to keep the family together, but gets burned every time. In one instance, Wladek begs Heller to help get Henryk out of jail, which, to Wladek's surprise, infuriates his brother. "They were taking you away," Wladek explains. "It's got nothing to do with you!" Henryk insists. "It's me they wanted, not you. Why do you have to interfere with other people's business?" Later, Wladek interferes again when he scrounges up employment certificates for his entire family. He naively believes that these certificates will keep them together and prevent them from being sent off to labor camps in the East. Despite Wladek's best intentions, Henryk and Halina are allowed to continue working in the ghetto, but Wladek, Regina, and their parents are sent to the *Umschlagplatz* – a fenced-in square – to await deportment. "I'm sorry. I did my best," an emotional Wladek says to his mother. "I thought the certificates would save us." From this moment forward, Wladek starts believing that everyone should look after their own interests, because, in the words of Polanski, family ties are both "very risky, very shaky" (Ballad 92) and "a source of great suffering" (Behr 125). Wladek shakes his head in disgust when Henryk and Halina turn down their chance to stay in the ghetto and instead

choose to rejoin their family at the *Umschlagplatz*. "Stupid...stupid," Wladek mutters under his breath.

As the Szpilman family is herded with masses of Jews into railway boxcars bound for the concentration camps, Itzak Heller spots Wladek and pulls him out of line. Wladek cries out for his family and tries to reunite with them, but Heller soon tackles him to the ground. "What do you think you're doing, Szpilman?" Heller says disgustedly. "I've saved your life! Now, get out! Just go. Go!" Realizing that this is his only chance to escape, Wladek starts to run away. "Don't run," Heller shouts. Adhering to this advice allows Wladek to blend into the mass confusion and pass by the German soldiers unnoticed. He has momentarily averted death, but Wladek is now left to survive on his own and live with the pain of knowing that he may never see his family again.

Returning in tears to the deserted ghetto – masterfully framed by Polanski in a medium tracking shot of Wladek walking down the middle of the street, flanked on each side by the strewn belongings of his Jewish brethren – Wladek looks to see if any of his friends were able to avoid the liquidation. At the Café Capri, he finds his former boss, Benek (Andrzej Blumenfeld), hiding underneath the bandstand. "Why are you here, Wladek?" Benek asks. "It's like this. I...I...We...All of them. All of them," Wladek mutters, unable to formulate the words. He is at a loss to explain to himself, let alone to Benek, why he should be deemed worthy enough to live, while other Jews, including his family, are being taken to their deaths.

After Benek bribes a Jewish policeman to get him and Wladek work demolishing the ghetto walls for the Germans, they step outside the decrepit ghetto to find a beautiful Polish marketplace – filled with bright colors, flowers, and happy merchants and

customers – on the other side. Polanski and his film crew heighten this contrast by having withheld much of the color palette from the ghetto scenes, and by dressing the Jewish characters in nothing but grays and browns. As Wladek walks out of the ghetto, the imagery is reminiscent of Dorothy's stepping out of dreary black-and-white Kansas into the wonderful Technicolor Oz in *The Wizard of Oz*, which opened in cinemas in 1939 as the Germans invaded Poland. Wladek's homecoming, however, is bittersweet. Unlike Dorothy, whose arrival in Oz is a storybook fantasy turned reality, Wladek's return is soiled by the realization of how much has been taken from him and his people.

Unable to stand being confined to the ghetto any longer, Wladek asks his friend Majorek (Daniel Caltagirone) – a friend in the resistance – to help him escape. "It's easy to get out," Majorek says. "It's how you survive on the other side that's hard." Majorek makes contact with Wladek's Polish actor friends, Janina Godlewska (Ruth Platt) and Andrzej Bogucki (Ronan Vibert), who, along with their friend Marek Gebczynski (Krzysztof Pieczynski), assist him in hiding from the Germans by securing him an apartment overlooking the ghetto wall. The apartment does not represent freedom, only more imprisonment – a fact that Wladek knows only too well. "Must feel better on this side of the wall, huh?" Marek naively asks Wladek. "Yes. But sometimes I'm still not sure which side of the wall I'm on," Wladek responds.

Ever since Polanski's first Lodz student film *Murder* (1957) – a silent one-minute short showing an anonymous man entering an apartment and stabbing its sleeping occupant to death – apartments have been foreboding settings that frequently recur in his films. They are claustrophobic dwellings that precipitate murder, madness, and sadism (*Repulsion*, 1965; *The Tenant*, 1976; and *Bitter Moon*, 1992), and are surrounded by

uncaring, often malicious neighbors (the nosy onlookers at the conclusion of *Repulsion*; the devil worshipping Roman and Minnie Castevet, played by Sidney Blackmer and Ruth Gordon, in *Rosemary's Baby*, 1968; and the perpetually complaining Monsieur Zy and Madame Dioz, played by Melvyn Douglas and Jo Van Fleet, in *The Tenant*). "...[T]he apartment itself is not a static place of comfort that we might associate with the idea of 'home,' but, in an eerie way, it becomes an almost living organism that envelops, tortures, and consumes the protagonist," Katarzyna Marciniak writes of *The Tenant*, although it could easily be said of his other tenement horrors (4).

The apartment brings a similar victimization upon Wladek in *The Pianist*. While it provides a sanctuary from physical harm, it also inflicts mental torture by leaving him an impotent voyeur. During the Jewish workers' valiant but unsuccessful twenty-eight day standoff against the Germans to avoid extermination, Wladek helplessly watches the shootings and fire fights from his apartment window. In a particularly disturbing moment, he witnesses burning Jews standing at the windowsills of the fiery ghetto, while German soldiers wait below laughing and urging them to jump; the scene recalls the mentally ill Trelkovsky (played by Polanski himself) in *The Tenant*, who envisions his neighbors as a theatre audience applauding his suicidal fall from his apartment window. Being on the other side of the wall saddles Wladek with guilt for not having been there to help. "I never should have come out. I should have stayed there and fought with them," Wladek tells Janina. "Wladek, stop that. It's over now. Just be proud it happened," she insists.

Although he wishes he had taken part in the failed uprising, Wladek lacks the strength and fortitude to withstand such a fight. His Jewish friends realize this weakness

from the onset of the film. At the beginning of his family's internment in the ghetto, Wladek asks his friend Yehuda (Paul Bradley) – the publisher of an illegal underground newspaper – to give him a job aiding the resistance. The pianist is met with a strong "no." Not only did Yehuda believe Wladek was "too well known," but he felt that Wladek possessed a vulnerability because he was an artist. "You musicians don't make good conspirators," Yehuda candidly tells him, before sarcastically adding, "You're too…too…musical!" This opinion is echoed by Wladek's fellow Jewish workers, during his time working for the Germans in the ghetto, when they see him whimpering as he is brutally whipped by a German (Torsten Flach) for dropping a load of bricks. "I hope you play the piano better than you carry bricks," one worker says. "He won't last long if he goes on like this," another adds. Consequently, they help get him a job that is less physically demanding.

Even when he briefly aided Majorek in stockpiling arms for the upcoming resistance, Wladek showed little concern for the fighters' effort and only expressed a selfish desire to escape the ghetto. After witnessing their deaths from his apartment window, he harbors guilt for not aiding them, but still remains unconvinced that their battle was worth dying for. "Well, what good did it do?" Wladek asks Janina. "What good? Wladek, I'm surprised at you. They died with dignity, that's what good it did," she scolds. Janina asserts that her Polish countrymen will rebel as well and reclaim their country. She does not, however, survive to see it. Wladek learns from Marek that Janina and her husband Andrzej have been arrested (and likely executed) by the Gestapo for stockpiling weapons. With the arrest of his friends, Wladek and the audience are left to decide whether a dignified death is better than an undignified survival.

As Leonard Quart of *Cineaste* observes, "[Wladek] remains an opaque figure throughout the film—an apolitical, not especially heroic or anti-heroic person, who has two passions—music and his own intense desire for survival" (43). These two passions are intertwined. His only reason for living has and always will be to play the piano. While he cared greatly for his family, they too played second fiddle – visually symbolized by his father's prized violin – to his love for the piano. Early in the film, Wladek resents his sister Halina interrupting his composing to tell him the news of the ghetto resettlement. "What? What? I'm working! What?" Wladek rudely says. Later, while he and his family are being herded to the trains, Wladek offers an apology for his selfishness. "I wish I knew you better," he says tearfully to Halina. Now with his family gone forever, Wladek's love for the piano only deepens, because it is his only reason left to survive.

Wladek's selfish single-minded passion for music mirrors Polanski's passion for filmmaking. Polanski had been a film lover ever since his parents first took him to the cinema, but, after they were taken away to the concentration camps, the movies became his reason for living:

> Movies became my ruling passion—my sole escape from the depression and despair that so often overwhelmed me. … I was enthralled by everything connected with the cinema—not just movies themselves but the aura that surrounded them. I loved the luminous rectangle of the screen, the sight of the beam slicing through the darkness from the projection booth, the miraculous synchronization of sound and vision, even the dusty smell of the tip-up seats. More than anything else, though, I was fascinated by the actual mechanics of the process. (Polanski, ***Roman*** 36-38)

While temporarily living in the city of Krakow with Polish friends of his parents, young Polanski – masquerading as a Polish gentile named "Roman Wilk" – often went to dangerous lengths to go to the cinema. On one occasion, he pressured the son of his new

guardians, Mietek Putek, to impersonate a German child, so they could buy tickets for a film at a German-only theatre. "We sat through a German version of *Puss-in-Boots* with actors disguised as animals and no Polish subtitles," Polanski recalls. "Listening to Mietek's recriminations as we rode home in the streetcar, I realized that we had risked our lives for a thoroughly lousy film" (36-37). Not even the threat of death and the endangerment of his friend could keep Polanski from fulfilling his cinematic desires.

After being discovered by a nosy neighbor (Katarzyna Figura), who hears him accidentally breaking a stack of dishes, Wladek flees his apartment to avoid apprehension. He soon goes to an address that was given to him by Marek in case of an emergency. To his amazement, his ex-girlfriend Dorota – now married and noticeably pregnant – answers the door. Her husband Michal Dzikiewicz (Valentine Pelka), who works with the underground, agrees to move him to a new hiding place in the morning. Awakened the next day by the sound of music, Wladek quietly peers through the cracked doorway, and finds Dorota in the other room playing Chopin on her cello. Listening to her practicing serves as a painful reminder of not only his days on Polish Radio, but also the music they had planned to create together. This pain only intensifies when Michal hides him in another abandoned apartment, which overlooks the *Schutzpolizei* and a German hospital treating the wounded from the Russian front. Inside, Wladek finds a piano, which he pretends to play. As he moves his fingers up and down through the air, Polanski's audience hears the music burned in his memory. He is so close to his love, but remains unable to show his affection.

Locked inside the apartment, Wladek is left a virtual prisoner without music or daily human contact. Michal arranges to have Antek Szalas (Andrew Tiernan) – a former

co-worker of Wladek's at Polish Radio – regularly bring him food and other necessities. To Wladek's frustration, however, Szalas often disappears for weeks at a time, leaving him with little food for survival. The malnutrition has caused Wladek to develop jaundice, which Szalas scoffs at upon returning. "Don't worry about that. It just makes you look funny," Szalas says callously. "My grandfather was jilted by his girlfriend when he got jaundice." When Szalas insists that financial difficulties have prevented him from coming more often with food, Wladek takes off his watch and asks him to sell it. "Food is more important than time," Wladek reasons. Szalas takes the watch and never returns. Running out of both food and time, Wladek is nearing death's door when the Dzikiewiczs eventually check on him. The victim soon learns how his victimizer has been profiting from his suffering. "That man Szalas should be shot," Dorota says. "He's been collecting money on your behalf all over Warsaw. Apparently, people gave generously, so he collected a tidy sum."

Even though Wladek did not receive any of these donations, the fact that Polish gentiles gave money for his survival, sadly, says less about his identity as a Jew and more about his identity as an artist. It is doubtful that many other Polish Jews would have been given as much support as Wladek received from his many benefactors. "His audacious survival is the result of his talent and his experience as a pianist," Christos Tsiolkas writes. "This is what saves him from being just another Jew" (para. 8).

Wladek's identity as an artist eventually leads to his ultimate survival. After narrowly escaping his tenement when it is bombed by the Germans, he wanders from one abandoned building to another looking for food and shelter. In the kitchen of one of these buildings, a starving Wladek finds a can of watermelons, which he tries to open

with a metal poker from the fireplace. The can suddenly falls and rolls to the foot of a nearby staircase, where a German officer, Captain Wilm Hosenfeld (Thomas Kretschmann), is standing. The two look at each other in disbelief. "What can you do?" Hosenfeld asks, as if demanding that Wladek give him a reason to spare his life. "I am…I was a pianist," Wladek frighteningly replies. Hosenfeld escorts Wladek to a piano in the next room and demands that he play something. Realizing that this may be his last performance, Wladek sits down and plays Chopin's *Nocturne in C-sharp Minor* – the last piece he played on Polish Radio before the war. His hauntingly beautiful playing touches Hosenfeld, who is brought to noticeable tears. The piece recalls both Wladek's and Hosenfeld's lives before the war, which were forever altered by Adolf Hitler's mad quest for world domination.

In an act of mercy, Hosenfeld allows Wladek to hide in the attic and brings him supplies. Polanski deviates from the actual events by being oblique about the German officer's motivations. The real-life Hosenfeld aided other Jews, including children (Szpilman 221), and admitted to the real-life Wladek that he was "ashamed of [being German], after everything that's been happening" (179). However, his cinematic alter ego is instead shown as a stern and ardent Nazi, who is intent on killing Wladek, until he "sees the light" through the pianist's music. Polanski even suggests an act of heavenly intervention by having a shaft of white light piercing through the windowpane and shining on Wladek as he plays. Now reborn as a man of compassion, Hosenfeld seeks redemption for his past sins against Jews by helping Wladek. "I don't know how to thank you," an overwhelmed Wladek says. "Thank God, not me. He wants us to survive. Well, that's what we have to believe," Hosenfeld replies. Before leaving with his

company, Hosenfeld asks Wladek what he will do after the end of the war. "I'll play the piano again. On the Polish Radio," Wladek says without hesitation.

Once World War II comes to an end, Hosenfeld is seen wounded and caged with other German prisoners awaiting transport by the Russians. Concentration camp survivors pass by the wire shouting profanities at them: "Look at them German fuckers! ... Murderers! ... Assassins! ... Dirty Bastards!" A Jewish musician, Lednicki (Cezary Kosinski), relieves his pain by verbally victimizing his victimizers. "Look at you now! You took everything I had," Lednicki yells. "Me, a musician. You took my violin. Sons of bitches!" With these words, Hosenfeld jumps up and asks him to get in touch with Wladek. "Tell him I'm here," the German officer pleads. "Ask him to help me." Sadly, by the time Lednicki contacts Wladek – happily playing the piano again on Polish Radio – Hosenfeld and his fellow prisoners are gone. An onscreen epilogue tells the audience that Wladek "continued to live in Warsaw until his death on 6th July 2000 – he was 88 years old," while Hosenfeld "died in a Soviet prisoner-of-war camp in 1952."

Although *The Pianist* concludes with its title character making his triumphant return to music by performing in front of a large concert audience, the ending is strangely bittersweet, because virtue goes unrewarded. Captain Wilm Hosenfeld, who undergoes a remarkable transformation from victimizer to rescuer, perishes, while the unheroic and self-absorbed Wladyslaw "Wladek" Szpilman survives. This unjust ending may have been mandated by the real-life events, but it remains largely consistent with the director's *oeuvre*. Injustice and ambiguity have always reigned supreme in Polanski filmdom. Unlike directors Frank Capra and Steven Spielberg, both of whom paint a positive portrait of humankind where truth and justice always prevail, Polanski's life has been too

stained by tragedy for him to offer the same kind of sentimental optimism. As he insisted to *Films and Filming* in 1969, Polanski cannot bring himself to give audiences the Hollywood happy ending:

> What I want is to finish a film without giving the audience the feeling of being satisfied, the trend which Hollywood developed so scientifically and called "the happy end." It is a thing which makes a film really mediocre, when a cycle is completed and finished and they live happy forever. I would rather carry packages in the railroad station than do this type of film. However, leaving a film in suspense is an easy way of avoiding a happy end, and there is something in between which is much more difficult but which can be done, and I am thinking of it a lot. Still, I must admit that all my films finish more or less the same way. In *Repulsion* I don't give a definite answer in the end. The man carries the girl who is half-dead and we finish on the photograph of her as a child and you can see that she was already disturbed; but I don't say any more. In *Cul-de-Sac* the man sits on a rock after the car has taken his second wife away; and he shouts the name of his first wife. And you don't know what's going to happen. Maybe the second wife will come back, maybe she won't. In [*The Fearless Vampire Killers*] the professor whips up the horse and he doesn't know that he is carrying two vampires on the seat behind him; even in a comedy I still leave this window open. In *Rosemary's Baby* the girl rocks the cradle, but the film is never completed; it will never satisfy. To satisfy is an unpleasant way for me; satisfaction is a most unpleasant feeling. (Gow 18)

Despite the unsettling injustice of the ending, *The Pianist* is unquestionably Polanski's most optimistic offering to date. The ambiguity of the aforementioned films – not to mention the bleakness of *Chinatown* – have now been replaced with the certainty of survival. For the first time, Polanski's audience has the "satisfaction" of assurance that the lead protagonist will survive emotionally from the victimization that he has endured. This is because Wladek possesses an outlet to release his innermost pain and suffering. Like Polanski himself, Wladek has his art.

Since winning the Oscar for "Best Director" for *The Pianist*, Polanski's career has started to go through a critical reevaluation. His past classics were screened at a National Film Theatre retrospective in London in the spring of 2004 and have begun to be reissued

on DVD in deluxe special editions. While there remains a possibility that he will someday be given his just due as one of the cinema's most important and uncompromising auteur directors, it is unlikely that Polanski will ever fully restore his sordid reputation. His identity as a victimizer – especially in the United States where he remains a fugitive – will likely always overshadow his filmmaking accomplishments. "I thought it was an astonishing decision, completely off the cards," *Empire* associate editor Ian Freer said of Polanski's Oscar win. "But I don't think there's going to be 'rehabilitation.' It is a very liberal Hollywood establishment, and I don't think that elsewhere in the US he will have quite the same support. I don't think the goodwill extends that far" ("Polanski's Success" para. 19-20). No single film, no matter how brilliant, will wipe away the director's serious crimes. Polanski's identity as a victimizer should not be forgotten, nor should his identity as a victim be diminished. They are two integral sides to a complex auteur director and his remarkable body of work.

Only time will tell if *The Pianist* marks a new optimistic era in the director's *oeuvre*. Polanski is currently in post-production on his screen adaptation of Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*, which stars Ben Kingsley as Fagin and ten-year-old Barney Clark in the title role. On the surface, this latest project appears to be a radical departure for Polanski, but upon closer examination, it becomes readily apparent that the novel's themes of victimization (e.g. childhood suffering and parental separation) are ones that Polanski knows all too well. Although he admits *Oliver Twist* is close to his heart, Polanski insists that he is not making the film for himself. "I want to make a film for children, in particular my own children, who deserve it," Polanski says. "It is going to be colorful and not dark as *The Pianist* was" ("Roman Polanski Filming" para. 3).

Has the impish auteur behind such grim affairs as *Cul-de-Sac*, *Chinatown*, and *Bitter Moon* finally seen "the light at the end of the tunnel," instead of fearing "the tunnel at the end of the light"? Or, will the eternal pessimist eventually take his audience on another trip down "the ghastly road"? Such speculation is a futile endeavor, because, as history shows, Polanski's life and career have been the most bizarre and unpredictable of Hollywood melodramas. What remains certain is that Polanski will continue making films until the end. "Whenever I hear the words 'lifetime achievement,' I wonder whether it's a hint I should quit," Polanski confesses. "...I'll tell you, I'm not going to quit" (Meils 96).

NOTES

[1] According to Polanski, his parents named him "Raymond," because they were "[a]nxious to invest their child with a French cachet…" and "erroneously assumed [Raymond] to be the French equivalent of Roman, a common enough Polish name." He later changed it to Roman, due to most Poles inability to pronounce Raymond (Polanski 12).

[2] The exact year Ryszard Polanski moved his family back to Krakow remains in question. Leaming cites the year as 1936 (16), while Kiernan instead says mid-1937 (20). Since Leaming's biography is generally considered superior, I have opted to go with 1936.

[3] For biographical information, I consulted various print and television interviews and especially the works of Kiernan, Leaming, and the director's own autobiography *Roman.*

[4] *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* defines "Kapo" as "individuals who have been recruited by an enemy to police their own people. The term was used to describe concentration camp prisoners, who were appointed to supervise other prisoners." This definition can be accessed online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kapo.

[5] *The Smoking Gun*'s article – entitled "Polanski the Predator" – can be accessed online at http://www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/polanskicover1.html. The article includes scanned images of the thirty-six-page grand jury transcript.

[6] See Baker for brief mention of Polanski's refusal to do press interviews promoting *The Pianist* (para. 15). The promotional featurette is entitled *A Story of*

Survival: Behind the Scenes of "The Pianist" and can be viewed on the Region 1 DVD released by Universal Home Video in the United States.

[7] I am taking an educated guess that Gelmis conducted his interview with Polanski during the late 1960s – probably between 1968 and 1969. His book was published in 1970, but it makes no reference to the 1969 murder of Polanski's wife Sharon Tate.

[8] Kosinski is infamous in literary circles for his novel *The Painted Bird.* Scholars still debate whether it should be classified as an autobiography or fiction. Sloan explains: "Many saw the book, which was published in 1965 and made Kosinski's reputation, as a thinly disguised autobiographical account. The boy's story was, quite simply, Kosinski's story, with a few details changed either from poetic license or for legal reasons. Later, questions concerning *The Painted Bird*'s facticity gave rise to a series of controversies. Did it actually portray Kosinski's personal experiences, or someone else's? Did it matter? Was facticity the same thing as authenticity? If *The Painted Bird* was less factual than supposed, was it therefore a lesser book? And if it was to some degree based on actual experience, where did the factual truth leave off and the imagination begin?" (7-8).

[9] According to Peacock, "directors were treated more like glorified stage managers—important to be sure—but still hired hands and very replaceable" (230).

[10] For an excellent historical overview of the evolution of the French New Wave critics and auteurism, see Baecque and Insdorf.

[11] *Mise-en-scène* is a French theatre term that has been borrowed by film scholars to describe the elements within the motion picture frame (Peacock 301).

[12] Much of the controversy over Sarris' book was over how he categorized the two-hundred directors that he profiled: "Pantheon Directors," "The Far Side of Paradise," "Expressive Esoterica," "Fringe Benefits," "Less Than Meets the Eye," "Lightly Likable," "Strained Seriousness," "Oddities, One-Shots, and Newcomers," "Subjects for Further Research," "Make Way for the Clowns," and "Miscellany."

[13] For an excellent analysis of the auteur controversy, see Kapsis. His discussion alerted me of Kael's essay "Circles and Squares."

[14] For my discussion of Hitchcock and his career, I consulted the scholarship by Bouzereau, Gottlieb, Kapsis, Rebello, Spoto, and especially Truffaut's essential *Hitchcock/Truffaut*.

[15] "To miss [*Repulsion*, 1965] would be worse than missing *Psycho*, if you've a taste for this sort of thing," Crowther insisted. "[Polanski] has delivered undoubtedly one of the best films of the year ("Movie on Insanity" 7).

[16] Other genre directors, especially helmers of low-grade action films and *film noirs*, were not as fortunate to have the big-budget funds that Hitchcock was given. However, they were still often able to keep control of their films, because studios were more concerned with big-budget spectacles than with low-budget B-pictures. "Once you made your first picture and came in on schedule and on budget, they left you alone," Andre de Toth explains. "From then on, nobody bothered me, nobody looked at rushes, nobody knew what the hell I was doing. After you brought in two or three pictures, you had that freedom. ... Why would I want to do a 'million dollar picture'? I didn't need a million headaches. With the lower budgets, most of the time, I was left completely alone" (Silver 23).

[17] According to Rebello, "Paramount [Pictures] gave Hitchcock carte blanche over story selection, screenwriter, cast, editing, and publicity for any project costing $3 million or less. The studio superstructure so coveted the director's services that they also turned over to him the highly lucrative rights to *Rear Window* [(1954)], *The Trouble with Harry* [(1955)], *The Man Who Knew Too Much* [(1956)], and *Vertigo* [(1958)] after release. No wonder a Paramount executive had written to a counterpart at MGM, while Hitchcock was making *North by Northwest* [(1959)] in 1958, 'Paramount functions practically as a studio setup for him'" (15-16).

[18] For more information on the huge egos and fast living of the New Hollywood directors, see Biskind's *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex 'n' Drugs 'n' Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood.*

[19] See Kapsis for an in-depth analysis of how Hitchcock was elevated from craftsman to auteur.

[20] Kael's and Kauffmann's reactions to Polanski's work will be discussed in Chapter Three and Chapter Two, respectively.

[21] While I am not the first scholar to note the recurring theme of victimization in the director's work – Bird, Eagle, and Wexman discuss this theme to varying degrees – my thesis, to my knowledge, is the first piece of scholarship to stress that this is the most vital theme in understanding the interrelationship between Polanski's life and his films. Bird, Eagle, and Wexman do not analyze this interrelationship and instead stress aesthetic and political concerns in Polanski's work.

[22] According to Leaming, Goldberg contributed little to the screenplay – apart from a few "ideas." She states that "Skolimowski claims that he 'didn't write a single word';

his job was to run cold water in the bathtub to cool the writers' drinks, as ice was a luxury beyond their means" (45).

[23] Audiences were likely further attracted to *Knife in the Water* (1962) due to its taboo status. According to Walker, the film was one of "sixteen films [in 1964] that were 'Condemned' outright..." by the Catholic Legion of Decency. Polanski's film was deemed unsuitable for all due to "nudity in the treatment..." (203). This ruling is laughably puritanical by modern standards, because the film's nudity is limited to a brief glimpse of Jolanta Umecka's breasts when she puts on her bikini top.

[24] In his autobiography, Polanski reveals that Twentieth Century-Fox wanted to hire Polanski to remake *Knife in the Water* (1962) in color with Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor, and Warren Beatty in the three principal leads. Polanski flatly refused the offer (Polanski, *Roman* 205-206).

[25] Polanski describes the London-based Compton Films as a distributor that originally made its riches from "timid soft-porn films" (Polanski, *Roman* 206). These films included the notorious Cornwall nudist camp film *Naked as Nature Intended* (1961) – starring *Peeping Tom* (1960) starlet Pamela Green – whose publicity campaign promised "Luscious Lassies by the Score – Clad in Smiles and Nothing More!" (*Internet Movie Database*). Klinger and Tenser's financing of Polanski was due to their "impulse to have a 'respectable' wing of operations on the cheap (*Repulsion* cost a mere £95,000, all in) in case of problems with the police over their less salubrious films..." (Halligan 61).

[26] This working title alludes to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, a personal favorite of Polanski's, which he wanted to film following his 1962 short film *Mammals*.

Polanski recounts: "...when I asked him for the film rights, he said he didn't believe films should be made from his plays. He said they're written for the stage and they're not meant to be adapted for the screen" (Gelmis 149). Consequently, the Beckett-inspired *Cul-de-Sac* (1966) served as a perfect substitute for Polanski's intended film adaptation of Beckett's play.

[27] Jack MacGowran was one of Polanski's favorite actors and described by the director as "not only a fine actor but also a true professional and real trouper who would remain half-immersed in icy water for hours without complaint" (Polanski, *Roman* 226). Due to the actor's fine work in *Cul-de-Sac* (1966), Polanski subsequently used MacGowran in *The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, But Your Teeth Are in My Neck* (1967) – playing the role of vampire hunter Professor Abronsius – and *A Day at the Beach* (1970). The Irish-born actor died prematurely at the age of 54 after filming *The Exorcist* (1973).

[28] The staff film critic of *Time* amusingly described Lionel Stander as a "magnificent crum-bum comic [who] looks like King Kong after 30 years of marriage to Fay Wray, and when he opens his mouth, he sounds like that genial gorilla gargling streetcars" ("Razor-Edged" 124)

[29] Although Donald Pleasence today is remembered as a screen villain due to his memorable roles as James Bond's scarred nemesis Ernst Stavro Blofeld in *You Only Live Twice* (1967) and the psychotic, bible-thumping Preacher Quint in *Will Penny* (1968) – not to mention real-life murderers William Hare and Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen in *The Flesh and the Fiends* (1959) and *Dr. Crippen* (1962), respectively – he was best known for his mild-mannered everymen at the time of *Cul-de-Sac*'s release. Similar milquetoast

performances can be found in, among other films, *The Big Day* (1960), *Arthur? Arthur!* (1969), and his guest appearance on the popular television series *The Outer Limits* ["The Man with the Power," 1963].

[30] The film Philip and Marion Fairweather are referring to is likely the Walt Disney adventure *Rob Roy, the Highland Rogue* (1954), which starred Richard Todd and Glynis Johns. Special thanks to my friend David Cairns for this tidbit. David's comments: "My God that movie looks boring! The worst bunch of post-war British cinema stooges – though I carry a small torch for the husky Glynis Johns."

[31] International film audiences were already used to seeing Françoise Dorléac in this type of role. Two years earlier, she portrayed a stewardess carrying on an affair with a married literary journalist in François Truffaut's sensuous drama *The Soft Skin* (1964).

[32] George's knowledge of Teresa's extramarital affairs is revealed when Christopher returns to the castle to go "shrimping" with Teresa a second time. The day before, Christopher told his parents and George that he had been shrimping with Teresa, when, in actuality, they were making love in the sand. Consequently, the pair only brought back five shrimps. When George hears that Christopher wants to go shrimping with Teresa again, he disgustedly says, "To bring back as many as yesterday!" George's anger suggests that he knows what is actually going on between them.

[33] The symbolic depiction of George as an egg getting ready to crack is further suggested by Pleasence's shaved bald head, which the actor contributed to the film against Polanski's wishes. "[Pleasence] presented me with a *fait accompli* by arbitrarily shaving his head prior to shooting," Polanski writes in his autobiography. "Although this

lent his performance an extra twist, I was annoyed that he hadn't consulted me first" (Polanski, *Roman* 227).

[34] Barbara Kwiatkowska is often referred to by her stage name Barbara Lass, which was given to her by Polanski (Leaming 40). In his autobiography, Polanski describes his first glimpse of her: "...I saw a girl walk over to the reception desk and pick up her key. She was spectacularly beautiful, with huge eyes and a ripe, sensual mouth. Her figure, shown off to perfection by a simply cut dress with horizontal stripes, was just as spectacular" (Polanski, *Roman* 149).

[35] The 1962 film *Rififi in Tokyo* should not be confused with Jules Dassin's classic heist thriller *Rififi* (1954). The former is an "in-name only" sequel released to capitalize on the success of Dassin's film.

[36] The liveliness of the dialogue can be, in part, attributed to the acting ensemble. According to Young: "Much of the dialogue proved awkward and unsuitable, owing to Polanski's lack of familiarity with the English language. But he often permitted his actors to write or improvise their own lines" (103).

[37] Fortunately, I was able to view *Cul-de-Sac* for academic study via the Region 2 DVD that is available in the United Kingdom from Anchor Bay Entertainment.

[38] Sharon Tate and Jay Sebring had been lovers prior to her marriage to Polanski, but, according to King, Sebring stayed "an important part of Sharon and Roman's intimate circle of friends. He took his replacement by Roman graciously, but many of his friends knew that he was still in love with Sharon" (60). Also of note, Sebring is often rumored to be one of the inspirations for the womanizing hairdresser George in the swinging '60s satire *Shampoo* (1975). With Sebring's premature death in mind, George's

tearful breakup with his lover Jackie – "What do you mean it's too late? We're not dead yet. That's the only thing that's too late." – has an extra layer of poignancy.

[39] Nicknamed "Gibby," Abigail Folger was the daughter of Peter Folger, chairman of the board of Folger Coffee. According to Polanski, Folger was a social worker and "left the house early each morning to teach at a downtown center for underprivileged black children..." (Polanski, *Roman* 314).

[40] Wojtek Frykowski had independently financed Polanski's short film *Mammals* (1962), which, according to Barbara Leaming, was "a notion absolutely undreamed of in Poland, where the cinema is nationalized" (47). Having subsequently fallen on hard times, he was aided by Polanski who tried to find him work in Hollywood (Polanski, *Roman* 301-302). Frykowski and Folger were romantically involved at the time of their deaths – the couple had met via their mutual friend Jerzy Kosinski (Sloan 252).

[41] Steven Parent was not a friend of the Polanskis. He had merely stopped by to try and sell Garretson his Sony AM-FM Digimatic clock radio (Bugliosi 42-43 & 48).

[42] Nineteen-year-old William Garretson, who lived in the guesthouse on the grounds of the Polanski home (Bugliosi 27), was originally considered a suspect in the murders, but he was later released ("Tate" 24).

[43] Reportedly inspired by the Beatles song of the same name (King 150) – featured on the group's *White Album* – Charles Manson saw "Helter Skelter" as a race war that would result in the "slaughter of all the white race" (151) with he and his followers being the only white survivors. According to King, Manson believed that "[a]t the end of the war, total confusion would reign; the blacks would be unable to make a go of things, and

[he] and his followers would then present themselves, taking over and ruling the world" (151).

There has also been speculation that the intended victims were record producer Terry Melcher – the son of Doris Day – and his live-in girlfriend Candice Bergen, who formerly rented the Polanski home and moved out over Christmas in 1968 (King 152). Melcher, who had met Manson at a party at the home of Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson, came into Manson's disfavor when he refused to give Manson, an aspiring musician, a recording contract (155). King states that Manson, who was well aware that Melcher no longer lived at the residence, thought that the new "residents of 10050 Cielo Drive, represented the establishment in abstract, and, in particular, a substitute for Melcher, Wilson, [Rudi] Altobeli and all of those who had turned their backs on him and ignored their promises to promote Manson and his music" (194).

[44] Polanski outbid Jean-Luc Godard for the film rights to Merle's novel, which angered the French New Wave director. MacCabe reports that, upon learning of Tate's murder, Godard venomously commented to his wife Anne Wiazemsky: "Good – [Polanski] just stole those rights from me" (212). Polanski subsequently left the project when it was cancelled by United Artists due to budgetary disputes. Instead, the film was made by Mike Nichols in 1973 for Avco-Embassy (Parker 167).

[45] King explains that the police initially concentrated much of their investigation on Frykowski's connections to Los Angeles drug dealers. "Although the drug link would eventually be dismissed when the killers began to confess, it remained the strongest possibility in the investigators' opinions throughout the fall of 1969," King writes (253). However, Polanski refutes Frykowski's connections to the drug underworld: "The press

painted an astonishingly inaccurate picture of Wojtek Frykowski, describing him as a 'major drug purveyor.' In many ways, Wojtek was one of the squarest people I've ever known" (Polanski, *Roman* 314).

[46] Biskind discusses how Hollywood was gripped in paranoia: "Rumors flew that Manson had a celebrity hit list which included the names of Elizabeth Taylor and Steve McQueen. ... There was a brisk sale in pistols and guard dogs. Intimidating automatic gates that had heretofore been beneath contempt in the Age of Aquarius, became de rigueur" (*Easy Riders* 78-79).

[47] Susan Atkins was arrested in connection with the murder of Malibu music teacher Gary Hinman. Among the other participants in the Hinman murder was Manson cult member Bobby Beausoleil, who starred in and composed music for Kenneth Anger's 1973 film *Lucifer Rising* (King 161-163 & 257).

[48] Originally sentenced to die in the gas chamber, Manson and the other four defendants had their sentences reduced to life imprisonment when the California State Supreme Court abolished the death penalty on February 18, 1972 (Bugliosi 633-634).

[49] Polanski writes in his autobiography: "I moved in[to a rented chalet] and resolved to ski until sheer exhaustion and physical punishment drove away my nightmares and bouts of self-reproach" (*Roman* 326).

[50] In *Playboy*'s coverage of the film's production, it is explained that Hefner chose *Macbeth* (1971) as his corporation's first venture into filmmaking because *Repulsion* (1965) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) showed that Polanski was "capable of handling macabre themes with imagination and taste" ("Making" 82).

[51] This is excluding Hitchcock's 1972 film *Frenzy*, which saw the "Master of Suspense" indulging in explicit violence – particularly the rape of matrimonial broker Brenda Blaney – for the first and only time. Ironically, Jon Finch – the lead actor in both *Frenzy* and *Macbeth* (1971) – starred in both Hitchcock's and Polanski's most graphically violent films.

[52] According to Prince, the MPAA revised Hollywood's Production Code in 1966 as a means to "bring films into closer accord with the youth audience and its general questioning of Establishment values" (8) and implemented a new ratings system in 1968 that remains in effect today. Consequently, Hollywood filmmakers in the late 1960s and early 1970s used this new freedom as a means to explore controversial issues. "The period's general social turmoil, its climate of political violence, and, most especially, the war in Vietnam convinced many filmmakers and the MPAA that movie violence paled next to the real-life bloodshed in the nation's cities and the jungles of Southeast Asia," Prince writes. "The savage bloodshed of the Vietnam War established a context whereby filmmakers felt justified in reaching for new levels of screen violence. Moreover, the war and the political assassinations of the 1960s fed a general cultural fascination with violence to which the movies responded" (8).

Yaquinto also sees this correlation: "As the war in Vietnam continued to mushroom and antiwar sentiments reached an equally theatrical pitch, bloodshed was a nightly news event. Then came the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King as well as the street rioting outside the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. It must have looked as if no amount of screen violence could ever seem like overkill to a public feeding off a daily diet of carnage" (115-116).

[53] For further reading on violence in Hollywood films of the 1970s, see Cagin, which includes an illuminating discussion of Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969) and *Straw Dogs* (1971).

[54] For further reading on the correlations between Polanski's *Macbeth* (1971) and the Manson murders, see Brottman.

[55] In his 1971 interview with *Playboy*, Polanski explains why he felt *Macbeth* (1971) was the project he needed to do following the Manson murders: "After the murders, everything I was considering seemed futile to me. I couldn't think of a subject that seemed worth while or dignified enough to spend a year or more on it, in view of what happened to me. That may sound extremely pompous, but I couldn't make another suspense story. And I certainly couldn't make a comedy; I couldn't make a casual film. In the state of mind I found myself, this type of project seemed most acceptable. As a kid, I loved Shakespeare, and when I was a teenager I saw Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* [(1948)] 20 times. I always had this great desire to make a Shakespearean movie someday, and when I finally decided I must go back to work, I thought to myself: 'That's something I could do, that's something I could give myself to. That's worth the effort'" (DuBois 96).

[56] In his amusingly sensational autobiography, Evans remembers the following phone conversation with Polanski:

> "The script's a fuckin' mess, Roman. I need you here yesterday."
>
> "I've got to go to Poland, Bob, for Passover."
>
> "Fuck Passover, Roman. If you don't get here, we're never going to get into shape. I'll have Passover at my house." (264)

[57] The differences between Towne's screenplay and Polanski's film are explored in two *Creative Screenwriting* articles: Arnett's "The Screenwriter as Artist: Three Lost Masterworks by Robert Towne" and Benedetto's "The Two Chinatowns: Towne's Screenplay vs. Polanski's Film." Although Towne won the Oscar for "Best Original Screenplay" for *Chinatown* (1974), an uncredited Polanski collaborated with Towne for "eight difficult weeks...with daily fights over the screenplay..." (Benedetto 50). Towne and Polanski have never fully admitted to how much Polanski contributed, but since, according to Benedetto, "Towne felt his original screenplay didn't need a lot of work and...he apparently was so resistant to changing it, it is not unreasonable to assume that Polanski was primarily responsible for the final shooting script. The extent of Polanski's contribution as a writer on *Chinatown* cannot be underestimated, and an argument could be made that Polanski deserved a share in the screenplay credit with Towne" (50).

[58] "Why I make [*Chinatown*, 1974]? Why of course, for money!" Polanski candidly confessed to Burke. "Understand: I would now like to buy a small plane, but though I want this, I would still not make trash films. Though I am whore, I am whore with principle. *Chinatown* is commercial but artistic, and now I must go fly" (42).

[59] During his American Film Institute seminar on March 20, 1974, Polanski spoke about why he chose Technicolor over black and white film stock: "I think black and white is something totally conventional, artificial. There's no bearing to our perception of the world since we see in color. It's something which happened only because photography was invented first in black and white, and we got used to it; and also it seems sometimes more real, because maybe the photographs of real life, which we saw in magazines and newspapers, used to be black and white; also, the newsreels. ... I think

that it's a certain coquetry now, using black and white. However it may render certain styles that you are after in certain situations, and, obviously certain directors use black and white to relate somehow to the black and white period in the cinema. If they make a film about the thirties they use black and white. I don't. On *Chinatown* [(1974)], which is Los Angeles 1937, whic [sic] happens in the heart of this town when this industry was created, I do it purposely in color, even in Panavision. I'm making a film which should look like a film made today, not a film made in 1937. A film made today, about that period" ("Roman Polanski: An American" 1B, 59).

[60] For more information on the film's décor and visual style, see Alonzo and Carringer.

[61] In an interview on the 1999 DVD release of *Chinatown* (1974), Towne remembers that a Hungarian vice cop once told him that the LAPD's policy in Chinatown was to do "as little as possible" due to these same reasons.

[62] Nicholson's film characters must have an aversion to metaphors. As his character Melvin Udall crudely states in *As Good As It Gets* (1997), "People who talk in metaphors oughta shampoo my crotch."

[63] Gittes displays a naïveté similar to the aforementioned interpretation of Polanski and *Macbeth* (1971) by Kael. Both men are afraid of being further victimized by the events of their past, but they unwittingly get burned by standing too close to the flame. In the case of Gittes, he does not want to invest much personal involvement in his investigations, but, at the same time, he chooses to work adultery/divorce cases, which are often volatile. Gittes' tendency to get burned is later suggested in the scene at the reservoir where he lights a cigarette. A policeman informs Gittes that smoking is

prohibited on the property, but Lieutenant Lou Escobar intercedes: "That's alright officer, we can make an exception this time. I'll see he's careful with the matches and doesn't burn himself." On the other hand, Polanski – particularly in *Macbeth* and *Tess* (1979) – walks a tightrope by dealing with controversial images and situations that have rather obvious parallels to circumstances in his life, but he becomes irritated when critics and scholars point them out.

64 In his profile of the "hot writer" in *Newsweek*, Kasindorf discusses how Towne grew up in San Pedro – just like the fisherman Curly in the film – where he "worked on a tuna clipper and noted the paranoid fear of the fishermen that their wives were cheating on them" (114).

65 The image of President Roosevelt, who hid the fact that he was crippled from polio, gives the audience its first suggestion of Gittes' impotence. Both Gittes and Roosevelt hide their handicaps in order to be viewed publicly as figures of strength. Without this front, they would be unable to gain the confidence of others.

66 This abusive consequence of Gittes' investigation is later revealed when the detective calls upon Curly for a Don Corleone-like "service" to pay off his bill.

67 To prevent confusion in this chapter, from this point forward, Evelyn Mulwray will be referred to as "Evelyn" and Hollis I. Mulwray as simply "Mulwray." This is how Gittes refers to them in the film.

68 Even though he wrote his novels in first person, Chandler disapproved of the "camera as character" technique and, according to Luhr, "wrote most of them using a third-person, 'objective' viewpoint" (138). Chandler once remarked that "[t]he camera eye technique of *Lady in the Lake* [(1943)] is old stuff in Hollywood. Every young writer

or director has wanted to try it. 'Let's make the camera a character'; it's been said at every lunch table in Hollywood one time or another. I knew one fellow who wanted to make the camera the murderer; which wouldn't work without an awful lot of fraud. The camera is too honest" (Gardiner 132). Despite Chandler's doubts, the camera has been used as "the murderer" to good effect in horror films: e.g., *Deep Red* (1975) and *Halloween* (1978).

[69] Polanski's character is not given a name. He is simply listed in the end credits as the "Man with Knife."

[70] In his conversation with Truffaut, Hitchcock drolly traces the term's origin:

> It might be a Scottish name, taken from a story about two men in a train. One man says, "What's that package up there in the baggage track?"
>
> And the other answers, "Oh, that's a MacGuffin."
>
> The first one asks, "What's a MacGuffin?"
>
> "Well," the other man says, "it's an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands."
>
> The first man says, "But there are no lions in the Scottish Highlands," and the other one answers, "Well then, that's no MacGuffin!" (138).

[71] Since she has never told anyone about her father raping her, let alone sought professional help, it would be nearly impossible for Evelyn to come to terms with her victimization. As Forward explains, "The victim of father-daughter incest is frequently alone with her problem. The family situation usually does not permit her to seek help, so she bottles her trauma. Incest is rarely the victim's only trauma, but it is the problem most difficult to share, so it tends to fester in secrecy and shame. This process sometimes continues even after the incest is discovered..." (70-71).

[72] A notable exception was Sarris, who wrote that "the ending is as stunning as any I have seen since *Day of Wrath* [(1943)], and the three-way confrontation of Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston is managed as magnificently as anything I have ever seen on the screen" ("Feeding" 63).

[73] I consulted both Arnett's and Benedetto's articles for this information. My copy of the *Chinatown* screenplay – published by Grove Press in 1997 – is a later draft and includes an ending more similar to Polanski's.

[74] Polanski talks about how Evans was supportive during the production of *Chinatown* (1974) in his interview with Burke and in the retrospective featurette *"Chinatown" Revisited*, which is available on the Region 1 DVD of *Chinatown* from Paramount Home Video.

[75] *Pirates* was eventually made by Polanski in 1984 as a $33 million production for independent producers Tarak Ben Ammar and Dino De Laurentiis. Released in the United States in 1986 with Walter Matthau in the role originally intended for Jack Nicholson, the film was greeted by poor box-office and scathing reviews. "Supporters of the view that Polanski was a spent force would see *Pirates* as absolute confirmation of it," Parker writes (251). While it is definitely not on par with Polanski's other films, *Pirates* is not the catastrophe that most critics hail it to be.

[76] It pains me considerably not to analyze *The Tenant* (1976) in more detail, since it is one of my personal favorites of Polanski's *oeuvre*. My thesis' structure does not provide room for a discussion. However, I urge everyone to rent it.

[77] Based on Sanders' best-selling novel, *The First Deadly Sin* is described by Polanski as the story of "an outwardly respectable publishing executive who, under

sinister influences, turns into a random killer and wields an ice ax on the streets of Manhattan" (Polanski, *Roman* 381). Due to his legal problems, Columbia Pictures cancelled Polanski's contract on the project (Parker 217). The film was eventually directed by Brian G. Hutton in 1980 with Frank Sinatra and Faye Dunaway in the lead roles. Given Sinatra's marriage to Mia Farrow deteriorated due to *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) going over schedule (124-125) and Dunaway's much documented displeasure over Polanski's treatment of her during the filming of *Chinatown* (1974) (195-196), it is safe to assume they would not have starred in *The First Deadly Sin* had Polanski directed it.

[78] According to Douglas, Nicholson's "hilltop compound was situated in a private canyon in the mountains between Beverly Hills and the San Fernando Valley" (80). The compound included three houses: two owned by Nicholson and one owned by Marlon Brando.

[79] At the time of the publication of Polanski's autobiography, Samantha Gailey's name had not been identified to the press. In his book, the director gives her the pseudonym "Sandra." I have included her real name in this quote to avoid confusion.

[80] Despite her agreement to testify against him, Polanski subsequently cast Huston – the real-life daughter of actor/director John Huston, who played the father-daughter rapist Noah Cross in *Chinatown* (1974) – as the psychologically tormented heroine Paulina Salas-Escobar in his 1994 thriller *Death and the Maiden.* She would have played a woman who kidnaps and tortures a doctor, who may or may not be the man who sexually victimized her fifteen-years earlier. Due to a scheduling conflict, however, Huston dropped out and was replaced by Sigourney Weaver (James C12). Coincidentally,

Huston cinematically explored the subject of a young girl sexually abused by her stepfather in her first directorial effort, the cable television film *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1996).

[81] According to Douglas, the director's decision to flee was largely due to a remark by Judge Rittenband secretly passed to Polanski by producer Howard Koch. Judge Rittenband stated to Koch in the men's room of the Hillcrest golf course: "I'll send [Polanski] away forever. I can't imagine anything more terrible, more disgusting, more heinous, having sex with a thirteen-year-old girl. I'll see this man never gets out of jail" (182-183).

[82] For further analysis of Polanski's faithfulness to Hardy's text and the difficulties translating the novel to screen, see Elliott and Niemeyer.

[83] Due to my lack of access to Bruckner's text – not to mention my poor understanding of the French language – I am unable to compare the novel with the film to assess whether the film's story owes more to Bruckner or Polanski. However, Bird asserts that the film is "loosely based" on the novel (77). To my knowledge, the novel has never been translated into English.

[84] According to King, Polanski's infidelity was difficult for Tate: "There is no doubt that Roman loved Sharon, but his idea of a committed relationship ran counter to hers, and there were bound to be problems. … She had thought that in marrying Roman she would finally tame him, but the reality was difficult" (94)

[85] Polanski's montage of Oscar's "fleeting affairs" delivers some of the film's darkest laughs, including a scene with the writer engaging in anal sex with a young mother, while her toddler daughter plays on the floor.

[86] According to King, Tate "apparently feared [Polanski] might coerce her into having an abortion, and friends later insisted that she deliberately kept the news from her husband until such an option was too late" (113). In contrast, Mimi reluctantly tells Oscar the day after visiting the doctor, and receives the reaction that the real-life Tate feared.

[87] Medication prescribed for "nausea, vomiting, and dizziness associated with motion sickness" (Silverman 362), which, ironically, should have been given to Nigel and Polanski's audience after listening to Oscar's graphic exhibitionism.

[88] Hoogland overreaches by suggesting that Oscar's murder of Mimi was done out of male heterosexual retaliation for her venture into lesbian "Otherness." "Through supposedly a gesture of retaliation, such a brutal act of violence in effect confirms the hero's exclusion from the antagonizing 'lesbian' scene," Hoogland writes. "By killing the trespassing female, the ousted protagonist underscores his literal effacement from the 'invisible' non-moment that at once constitutes the narrative's turning point and reveals the film's underlying core of castration anxiety" (470-471). Given Oscar's gleeful enthusiasm recounting the lesbian encounter to Nigel, it is difficult to see the validity in Hoogland's assertions. Oscar kills Mimi because he does not want the cycle of victimization to continue. He can no longer live with their dual identities as victims and victimizers.

[89] The film's political overtones were atypical for a director, who once referred to those interested in politics as "a pretty stupid, uninspired race" (DuBois 126).

[90] Originally planned to start filming in April 1985, *The Two Jakes* was abruptly cancelled by Paramount Picture due to squabbling between star Jack Nicholson (reprising

his role as J.J. "Jake" Gittes), Robert Evans (producer and slated co-star as the "second Jake"), and Robert Towne (screenwriter and slated director). Nicholson tried to revive the production with a variety of directors, including Polanski, Mike Nichols, and Bernardo Bertolucci (McGilligan 343-346 & 368). The film was eventually directed by Nicholson himself and released in 1990.

[91] According to Douglas, Polanski was to film *Mary Reilly* with his wife Emmanuelle Seigner in the title role and Jack Nicholson in the dual role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (260). The film was eventually made by Stephen Frears with Julia Roberts and John Malkovich.

[92] For an analysis of the "double" theme in Polanski's work, see Lawton. Her essay concentrates on *Knife in the Water* (1962) and *The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, But Your Teeth Are in My Neck* (1967).

[93] During the filming of *Repulsion* (1965), Polanski reportedly provoked actress Catherine Deneuve into a fight to get the performance he wanted. "He gave her the candlestick and she swung at him," Leaming writes. "The Deneuve the spectator sees on screen is not acting—the violence is real, directed at Polanski" (61).

[94] Unlike most film critics, I find *The Ninth Gate* (1999) to be a very entertaining, light diversion. I still hold to the words I wrote in my original student newspaper review: "While *The Ninth Gate* may not be on par with such Polanski masterpieces as *Cul-de-Sac* [(1966)], *Repulsion* [(1965)], and *Rosemary's Baby* [(1968)], it is a taut and exquisitely stylish mystery that is lightyears ahead of the recent films of its type" (Weedman 5B).

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FILMOGRAPHY

Year	*Film*	*Director*
1932	*Scarface*	Howard Hawks
1933	*King Kong*	Merian C. Cooper
1935	*The 39 Steps*	Alfred Hitchcock
1936	*The Petrified Forest*	Archie Mayo
1937	*The Hurricane*	John Ford
1939	*The Wizard of Oz*	Victor Fleming
1941	*Citizen Kane*	Orson Welles
1941	*The Maltese Falcon*	John Huston
1943	*Day of Wrath*	Carl Theodor Dreyer
1943	*Lady in the Lake*	Robert Montgomery
1944	*Double Indemnity*	Billy Wilder
1946	*The Best Years of Our Lives*	William Wyler
1946	*The Big Sleep*	Howard Hawks
1946	*Notorious*	Alfred Hitchcock
1947	*Out of the Past*	Jacques Tourneur
1948	*Hamlet*	Laurence Olivier
1948	*Key Largo*	John Huston
1948	*Unfaithfully Yours*	Preston Sturges
1951	*Strangers on a Train*	Alfred Hitchcock
1954	*Rear Window*	Alfred Hitchcock
1954	*Rififi*	Jules Dassin
1954	*Rob Roy, the Highland Rogue*	Harold French
1955	*The Desperate Hours*	William Wyler
1955	*The Trouble with Harry*	Alfred Hitchcock
1956	*The Man Who Knew Too Much*	Alfred Hitchcock
1957	*Murder*	Roman Polanski
1958	*The Music Room*	Satyajit Ray
1958	*Two Men and a Wardrobe*	Roman Polanski
1958	*Vertigo*	Alfred Hitchcock
1959	*The Flesh and the Fiends*	John Gilling
1959	*North by Northwest*	Alfred Hitchcock
1960	*The Big Day*	Peter Graham Scott
1960	*L'Avventura*	Michelangelo Antonioni
1960	*Peeping Tom*	Michael Powell
1960	*Psycho*	Alfred Hitchcock
1961	*Naked as Nature Intended*	George Harrison Marks
1962	*Dr. Crippen*	Robert Lynn
1962	*Knife in the Water*	Roman Polanski
1962	*Rififi in Tokyo*	Jacques Deray
1962	*Mammals*	Roman Polanski

1962	*What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*	Robert Aldrich
1963	*The Great Escape*	John Sturges
1964	*Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*	Stanley Kubrick
1964	*Goodbye Charlie*	Vincente Minnelli
1964	*The Soft Skin*	François Truffaut
1964	*Man's Favorite Sport?*	Howard Hawks
1965	*The Loved One*	Tony Richardson
1965	*Repulsion*	Roman Polanski
1966	*Cul-de-Sac*	Roman Polanski
1965	*Fahrenheit 451*	François Truffaut
1966	*Blow-Up*	Michelangelo Antonioni
1966	*Hawaii*	George Roy Hill
1966	*Masculine-Feminine*	Jean-Luc Godard
1967	*Bonnie and Clyde*	Arthur Penn
1967	*The Dirty Dozen*	Robert Aldrich
1967	*Don't Make Waves*	Alexander Mackendrick
1967	*Eye of the Devil*	J. Lee Thompson
1967	*The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, But Your Teeth Are in My Neck*	Roman Polanski
1967	*Valley of the Dolls*	Mark Robson
1967	*You Only Live Twice*	Lewis Gilbert
1968	*Night of the Living Dead*	George A. Romero
1968	*Romeo and Juliet*	Franco Zeffirelli
1968	*Rosemary's Baby*	Roman Polanski
1968	*2001: A Space Odyssey*	Stanley Kubrick
1968	*Will Penny*	Tom Gries
1968	*The Witchfinder General*	Michael Reeves
1969	*Arthur? Arthur!*	Samuel Gallu
1969	*Easy Rider*	Dennis Hopper
1969	*Justine*	George Cukor
1969	*The Wild Bunch*	Sam Peckinpah
1969	*Women in Love*	Ken Russell
1970	*A Day at the Beach*	Simon Hesera
1970	*Soldier Blue*	Ralph Nelson
1971	*A Clockwork Orange*	Stanley Kubrick
1971	*The Devils*	Ken Russell
1971	*Dirty Harry*	Don Siegel
1971	*The French Connection*	William Friedkin
1971	*The Hunting Party*	Don Medford
1971	*Macbeth*	Roman Polanski
1971	*Straw Dogs*	Sam Peckinpah
1972	*Frenzy*	Alfred Hitchcock
1973	*What?*	Roman Polanski
1973	*The Day of the Dolphin*	Mike Nichols
1973	*The Exorcist*	William Friedkin

1973	*Last Tango in Paris*	Bernardo Bertolucci
1973	*The Long Goodbye*	Robert Altman
1973	*Lucifer Rising*	Kenneth Anger
1974	*Caravan to Vaccarès*	Geoffrey Reeve
1974	*Chinatown*	Roman Polanski
1974	*The Conversation*	Francis Ford Coppola
1974	*The Great Gatsby*	Jack Clayton
1975	*Farewell, My Lovely*	Dick Richards
1975	*Deep Red*	Dario Argento
1975	*Shampoo*	Hal Ashby
1976	*The Tenant*	Roman Polanski
1978	*Halloween*	John Carpenter
1979	*Tess*	Roman Polanski
1980	*The First Deadly Sin*	Brian G. Hutton
1986	*Pirates*	Roman Polanski
1988	*Frantic*	Roman Polanski
1990	*Misery*	Rob Reiner
1990	*The Two Jakes*	Jack Nicholson
1992	*Bitter Moon*	Roman Polanski
1993	*Little Buddha*	Bernardo Bertolucci
1993	*Sliver*	Phillip Noyce
1993	*Schindler's List*	Steven Spielberg
1994	*Ace Ventura, Pet Detective*	Tom Shadyac
1994	*Death and the Maiden*	Roman Polanski
1994	*The Flintstones*	Brian Levant
1994	*Four Weddings and a Funeral*	Mike Newell
1994	*Pulp Fiction*	Quentin Tarantino
1994	*Sirens*	John Duigan
1994	*Speed*	Jan De Bont
1994	*True Lies*	James Cameron
1994	*Widows' Peak*	John Irvin
1996	*Bastard Out of Carolina*	Anjelica Huston
1996	*Mary Reilly*	Stephen Frears
1997	*As Good As It Gets*	James L. Brooks
1999	*The Blair Witch Project*	Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez
1999	*Eyes Wide Shut*	Stanley Kubrick
1999	*The Ninth Gate*	Roman Polanski
2002	*Chicago*	Rob Marshall
2002	*Gangs of New York*	Martin Scorsese
2002	*The Pianist*	Roman Polanski